On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery

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Edited by Lynda Jessup with Shannon Bagg

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On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery

Edited by
Lynda Jessup
with Shannon Bagg

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Paper 135

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Abstract

In recognizing the established intellectual and institutional authority of Aboriginal artists, curators and academics working in cultural institutions and universities, this publication serves as an important primer on key questions that accompany the changing representational practices of the community cultural centre, the public art gallery and the anthropological museum.

In this anthology, Aboriginal and other contributors address current and provocative issues arising from Aboriginal historical and contemporary art, and their production, collection and exhibition.

This illustrated collection is based on workshops held at the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Vancouver Art Gallery in March 2000. It includes sixteen original papers and seven synthesizing "after-essays" that together reflect analytically and incisively on policies and practices in recent historical and contemporary curatorial projects.

Résumé

Cette publication met en lumière l'autorité intellectuelle d'artistes, de conservateurs et d'universitaires autochtones qui œuvrent au sein d'établissements culturels et d'universités. Elle constitue une importante introduction sur les questions fondamentales qui accompagnent l'évolution des pratiques de représentation des centres culturels communautaires, des musées et des musées d'anthropologie.

Dans cette anthologie, les Autochtones et les autres collaborateurs traitent de questions d'actualité, provocantes, que soulèvent l'art autochtone contemporain et historique de même que la production, l'acquisition et la mise en exposition de cet art.

Cet ouvrage illustré émane d'ateliers qui ont eu lieu au Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario et au Vancouver Art Gallery en mars 2000. Il comprend 16 essais originaux et 7 essais synthétisés après coup qui reflètent, de manière analytique et perspicace, les politiques et les pratiques ayant eu cours dans le cadre de projets de conservation contemporaine et historique menés récemment.

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Lynda Jessup

Hard Inclusion

Lynda Jessup

> *Periodic or "soft" inclusion ... absolves the institution from a long-term commitment to the serious treatment of works by Native artists ... This intermittent inclusion, or "tokenism," almost always guarantees consistent exclusion ... and gives the impression that there is no problem of exclusion.*
>
> Lee-Ann Martin (1991, 25)

It will be immediately apparent to anyone who has visited an art institution lately that, despite increasing recognition, Native North American arts are still poorly represented in public art galleries. In contrast, works by First Nations artists have enjoyed increasing visibility in spaces such as anthropological museums, cultural centres, and commercial galleries. There was even an increase in the collection of Native contemporary work by art institutions in Canada during the last decade of the twentieth century, due in large part to a Canada Council for the Arts program designed to encourage the purchase of Native art by public galleries. The program was closed in 1999, however, having supported the purchase of 135 works by some forty institutions across the country in its first two years of operation. There was a feeling in a number of circles that, like many temporary support programs designed to foster permanent structural change, its continuation would compromise its long-term effectiveness. After three years in operation, the financial incentive offered by the program had generated the desired interest in collecting Native art, but only the conclusion of the program could lead to the permanent inclusion of Aboriginal art in acquisition budgets. As long as the program was in operation, the purchase of work by artists of Aboriginal descent would remain a subsidized supplement to gallery acquisition budgets.[1]

In the 1991 report to the Canada Council that helped to initiate the program, Lee-Ann Martin notes, "With a few significant exceptions, most Canadian galleries have broadly worded policies which do not specifically state that works by Native artists will be included. However, directors and curators quickly point out that their policies and practices do not specifically *exclude* these works from their collections and exhibition mandates" (Martin 1991, 19). The same situation holds for Aboriginal historical work, which has not been collected by Canadian art institutions in any systematic or consistent way, if at all. Although a number of public galleries have, in the latter decades of the twentieth century, accepted donations of art dating from the 1960s and 1970s – work that would now be designated as "historical" – and have even put together small collections, Native production prior to the mid twentieth century has been ignored. Among authoritative (or "majority") art galleries, neither the Vancouver Art Gallery nor the Art Gallery of Ontario hold collections of work by North American Aboriginal peoples created before mid-century, and the same is true for the National Gallery of Canada. Even isolated examples of such work in public art galleries are sporadic. The National Gallery has a small argillite carving that was acquired in 1927, and the Vancouver Art Gallery has a few baskets from the Northwest Coast and two model totem poles, all of which are displayed infrequently. The Art Gallery of Ontario owns a group of late nineteenth-century argillite carvings attributed to Charles Edenshaw and Isaac Chapman; these carvings are currently installed in a Canadian historical wing that is otherwise devoted to settler art. One other authoritative gallery – the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal – has a collection of First Nations historical works, but it is small and consists mostly of carvings by Northwest Coast artists.[2]

Inuit art is the exception. Most public galleries in Canada boast a collection of Inuit sculpture, prints, and/or drawings produced since 1949, the year of James Houston's famous trip north to what is now Inukjuak. That year marks the beginning of efforts on the part of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, followed in 1961 by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, in the establishment of Inuit cooperatives and the marketing of Inuit art to collectors in the south. With the subsequent development of the field of Inuit art, some institutions – particularly the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of Ontario – have also built holdings of historical work produced before the 1950s. Purchases have been used mostly to enhance donations from the small group of enthusiastic private collectors that developed alongside the cooperatives, and from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, which in 1989 dismantled an extensive promotional collection accumulated over thirty-five years by transferring the works to a number of Canadian institutions (Inuit Art World 1990/91, Mitchell 1996).

It might be tempting to explain (and in so doing tacitly excuse) the absence of other historical work by Aboriginal peoples as the inevitable product of history – specifically a history of colonialism that locates such material almost exclusively in anthropological museums and ethnographic collections. Apprehended in terms of Western epistemologies, it was sorted alongside other objects according to the

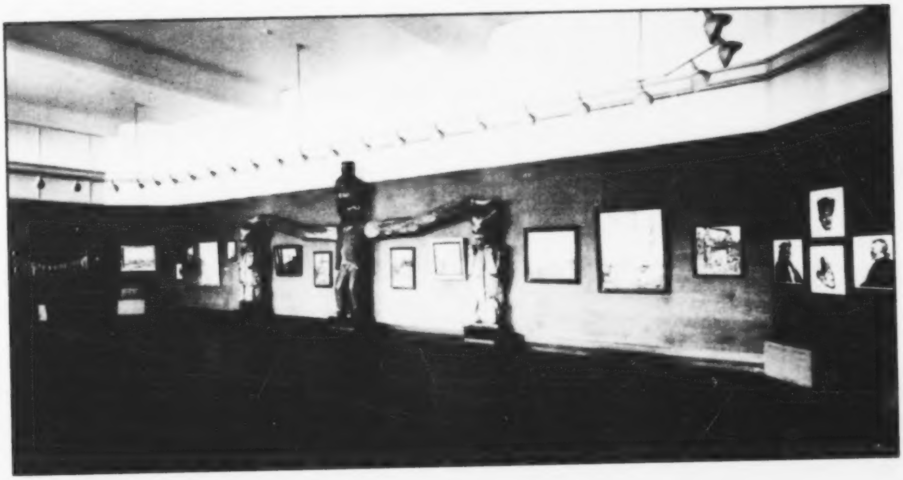

Figure 1
"Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 20 November – 31 December 1927. Installation photograph. This was one of the first exhibitions to present works by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists together in a gallery setting. Photograph: National Gallery of Canada.

macro-classifications of the museum system, the "named categories" for which disciplinary museums have been built: Art, Archaeology, Ethnology, History, Folk Culture, Natural Science, and Science (Phillips 1993a, Bennet 1995, Conn 1998, Hooper-Greenhill 1992). There have been occasions, in both domestic and international contexts, when the boundary between Ethnology and Art has been blurred – significantly cases in which Native North American work has been moved temporarily from the ethnological museum to the art gallery to be used in the representation of a Canadian nationalist art history. The earliest domestic example is the National Gallery of Canada's 1927 "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern" (fig. 1). It combined Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw, Nuxalk, Nuu'chah'nulth, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Gitksan, and Nisga'a works with pieces by prominent Euro-Canadian artists, advancing a deeply historical story of Canadian art originating in the "national consciousness" and "primitive art" of the Indian and culminating in the "modern" work of Emily Carr and the Group of Seven (*Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern* 1927, 2). This narrative, which relegated Native cultures to an indeterminate past, was repeated internationally in the National Gallery of Canada's 1938 show, "A Century of Canadian Art," which was mounted for the Tate Gallery in London as the first "oversea" exhibition of Canadian historical painting and sculpture (fig. 2). As National Gallery Director Eric Brown wrote in a letter to High Commissioner for Canada Vincent Massey, "We are starting the story with one or two West Coast Indian Argelite [sic]

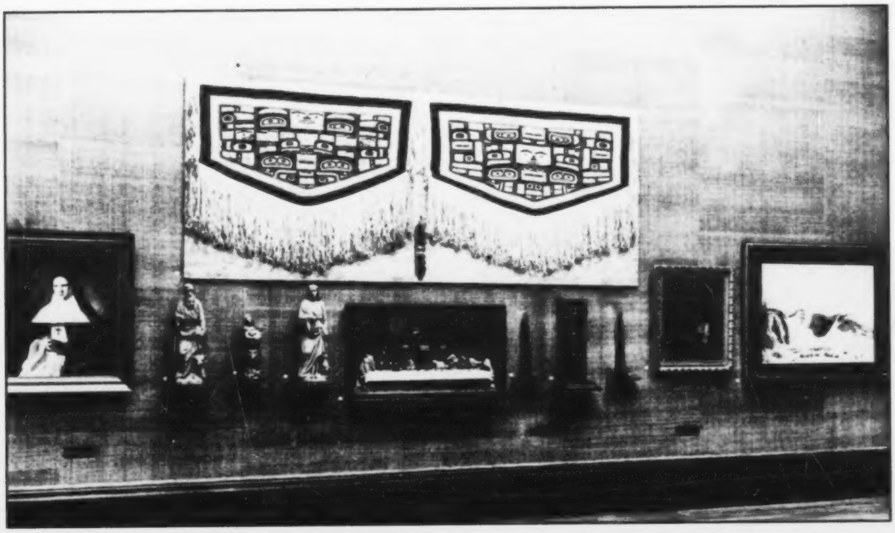

Figure 2
"A Century of Canadian Art," Tate Gallery, London, October 1938. Installation photograph. This exhibition, mounted by the National Gallery of Canada for the Tate Gallery in London, was the first overseas exhibition of Canadian historical art. It included three model poles and two Chilkat blankets. Photograph: National Gallery of Canada.

carvings and a Chilkat Blanket and going from there to Quebec for a group of French Canadian wood-carvings, which will include your 'Last Supper.' From that background we shall start on the painters and sculptors and carry the story to the present day." According to Brown, "the Trustees [of the National Gallery] were greatly taken with the idea and think it would be of immense value both as an Empire gesture and an artistic event."[3]

Such exhibitions were of course fundamentally colonialist in their understanding of Native culture, but in any case, the transgression of museological boundaries they openly celebrated was only temporary. In 1929, for instance, when National Museum ethnologist Marius Barbeau sent Brown a small selection of Nisga'a articles in an effort to entice him to collect Native North American work for the National Gallery, Brown refused, reinforcing an already normalized system of exclusion that continues in galleries today.[4] It is not an overstatement to say that, as a result of such policing, art galleries remain powerful ideological spaces dominated by traditional Western aesthetics, when "the worst that can be said of traditional aesthetics," John Guillory points out, "is that its conflation of the aesthetic with the work of art *is* its ideology" (1993, 336). Traditional aesthetics, Guillory argues, restricts aesthetic experience to the work of art, and denies the fact that aesthetic experience pervades the field of cultural production, that there is "no way to experience cultural objects without having aesthetic experience" (1993, 336). Traditional aesthetics has also led many to argue that the solution to the resulting problem of exclusion lies simply in "elevating" previously excluded cultural forms to the status of "art," leaving intact (even legitimating) the hierarchies of race, gender, and class – the social relations – upon which such evaluations are based in the first place. The fact that traditional aesthetics has maintained its hegemony, despite increasing recognition of its restrictive ideology, has also fueled recent critiques of the categories of cultural production, and has quickened the shift among art historians from the study of art to the more broadly defined field of visual culture.[5]

This situation also explains why Native North American arts – particularly historical works – have been more successfully advanced in other types of institutions, particularly cultural centres and anthropological museums. These institutions are under less pressure (whether of convention or conviction) to create the illusion that the works in their collections are a source of aesthetic experience as such or exclusive of the other social meanings attached to cultural products. From the outset, Aboriginal-run cultural centres and museums, privileging the Native communities in which they are located, have been open to the diversity of forms and meanings that constitute expressive culture. They could, and some argue they should, operate at a remove from majority cultural institutions and their audiences, thus maintaining their role in relation to the marginalized constituencies that define them and to whom they give voice.[6] In contrast, anthropological museums, while appearing to exploit the situation of their collections "outside" the operation of traditional Western aesthetics, have actually responded to its critique, reconstructing themselves with more or less success as spaces within which to advance the arts of Aboriginal peoples in terms consistent with their understandings and experiences. Yet, in spite of this revisionary effort, the location of this space within the anthropological museum still effectively wraps the work in the nineteenth-century ideologies that gave rise to the system of disciplinary museums in the first place.

This is why Aboriginal representation in art galleries must be effected alongside ongoing efforts to redefine the role of anthropological museums in relation to Native peoples. It could even be argued that if such redefinition suggests that the primary role of anthropological museums is to advance the decolonization of First Nations (Phillips 2000), these efforts should also be directed towards the decolonization of the museum system as a whole, including art galleries. In today's art galleries, the hegemony of the settler version of Aboriginal history is still complete; in this narrative, Aboriginal peoples themselves have no place – let alone a place within which they can tell their own histories. When contemporary work by artists of Aboriginal descent is represented, it appears as part of the culmination of the Western European artistic tradition. This lack of the historical presence of Aboriginal contemporary artists – of their "historical reality" – maintains on another level what Lee-Ann Martin describes as one of the primary reasons for the earlier exclusion of Native contemporary work from art galleries. As she puts it, the idea that many of the contemporary pieces were "too political" to be art constituted a "denial of the complex historical and contemporary realities which inform much art of First Nations peoples today" (1991, 19–20). Martin might well have said that such exclusion constitutes a denial of the complex historical and contemporary realities of First Nations peoples in general. The history taught in the art gallery (to adapt the observations of Henry Louis Gates Jr.) is that of a political and aesthetic order in which no Aboriginal peoples are "able to discover the reflection or representation of their images, or hear the resonances of their cultural voices" (Gates 1990, 105).

This continuing denial of historical existence has far-reaching implications. At the most basic level, it suppresses the historical reality underpinning contemporary claims to hereditary lands and resources – the complex historical and contemporary realities that inform the lives of First Nations peoples today (Sioui Wendayete 1992, Todd 1992, Young Man 1992). At the most immediate level, it justifies the ongoing exclusion of Aboriginal curators, educators, administrators, and visitors who would give this historical reality a cultural voice. To recognize and redress this denial would be to exploit one of the primary functions of history, which is, as Hayden White puts it, to restore "the past into the present ... so that the present may be framed as itself a product of the past; and so that the past may be seen as that from which, for one particular reason or another, we are descended and thereby accounted for." As White has pointed out, the general nature of history is to make the past part of the present so that the past can "function and do work in and on the present" (White 1978, 49).

A Working Discussion

The collection of essays presented in this volume attempts to advance such "effective" or "motivated" history (Moxey 1995, Preziosi 1993). Neither a conference proceedings nor a conventional anthology, it is the result of the two-part workshop series entitled "A Working Discussion on Aboriginal Representation in the Art Gallery" that was held in March 2000; the first part was held at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and the second part at the Vancouver Art Gallery in British Columbia. This volume consists of essays written in preparation for the workshops, together with additional papers and reflections on the discussions that kept the series going through two weekends. Like the workshops, this book is intended to bring curators, academics, and artist practitioners together to consider the representation of Native North

American visual culture in the gallery context, and was motivated in part by plans on the part of the Art Gallery of Ontario to reinstall its Canadian historical art wing to incorporate First Peoples arts. For this reason, both the workshops and the essays are intended to focus on practical and ideological questions of perception and representation of Native visual culture in art galleries and to reactivate discussion of institutional policies and mandates, curatorial practices, gallery installations, and collections. In other words, both the workshops and this book represent an attempt to bridge theory and practice so as to assess the impact of increased Aboriginal representation on the existing resources, structures, installations, and policies of public art institutions in Canada.

In the workshops, this effort was facilitated by framing the two host institutions – the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Vancouver Art Gallery – as case studies within the larger discussion, the impact of which is reflected in the essays in this volume. Although the topics and issues raised by the contributors for ongoing consideration cover a much broader range than the site-specific questions generated by the case studies, the installations and collections of these two institutions remain useful in defining the problem in concrete terms, as a reminder of the instrumental relationship between theory and practice. The case studies also force us to look at issues with an increased awareness of regional perspectives and specific mandates and of the differing relationships of institutions to their artistic-intellectual communities – as well as the historical conditions that gave rise to those relationships – and to consider how different institutions have been critiqued in terms of a shifting politics of representation.

Drawing on national and international perspectives to situate "local" issues in an international context, both this collection and the discussions on which it is based contribute to the discourse surrounding gallery practices supporting Aboriginal visual culture worldwide. In doing so, they become part of the critical discussion of these issues that has taken place in Canada over a number of years – significantly, in the series of National Native Artists' Symposia, which began in 1978 and continued through the 1980s. The Society for Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry (SCANA) was formed at the conclusion of the third National Native Artists' symposium in 1983 in part to advance increasing efforts to "pressure publicly funded art galleries to cease the deliberate exclusion of 'Indian art,' encourage tours of national collections to local Indian communities and explore the formation of a national native art gallery and art bank" (General 1987, quoted in Hill 1989, 13).[7] These events were followed by the Indigena Colloquium, which was held in 1992 (with the support of SCANA) at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in conjunction with the opening of the exhibition "Indigena: Perspectives of Indigenous Peoples on 500 Years." In the words of organizer Gerald McMaster, this Colloquium was intended "to address critical issues emanating from the Columbian Quincentenary" (1996, 1) through discussion of historicity, cultural conquest, Aboriginal title, identity, and sovereignty; it exploited the institutional space for serious exchange generated that year, not only by "Indigena," but also by the National Gallery of Canada show "Land, Spirit, Power," and by the exhibition, "New Territories 350/500 Years After," which was held in Montréal and Québec.[8]

The year 1992 also marked the release of the report of the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, a national body jointly organized by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association in response to issues raised by the controversial 1988 Glenbow Museum exhibition, "The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples."[9] The Task Force was convened to develop an ethical framework within which Aboriginal peoples and cultural institutions in Canada could collaborate to represent Aboriginal history and culture, focusing, after two years of consultations and deliberations, on the issue of repatriation and on the necessity of increased Aboriginal access to museum collections and involvement in the interpretation of Aboriginal history and culture. The report stated that interpretation stressing the role of First Nations in Canadian history "should replace the stereotyped exhibitions that depict First Peoples as dying, primitive and inferior cultures, or cultures isolated from Canada's history, in 'pre-history' galleries," adding, "The linkage between Aboriginal heritage and the present circumstances of First Peoples should also be represented; in fact, museums should become forums for discussions of relevant contemporary issues" (Task Force on Museums and First Peoples 1992, 4). Significantly, alongside the limited availability of existing ethnographic collections to First Nations, the absence of Aboriginal contemporary art in public art galleries was identified in the report as an issue of access, highlighting exclusion from art institutions as an obstacle to the representation of Aboriginal artistic production.[10]

"A Working Discussion," coming almost a decade after the Task Force report, represented an attempt to address the ongoing limitations to full representation of Native visual culture in the public art gallery by penetrating more deeply into institutional practices than had been possible to date. This was achieved by taking advantage of the Queen's University-Art Gallery of Ontario Doctoral Directed Research Program. This Program was initiated in 1997 through the collaborative efforts of the two institutions to forge links between the scholarly and pedagogical mission of the university and the practices of the art gallery. As a project within this program, "A Working Discussion" was developed by faculty and students working in the Ph.D. program in art history at Queen's University in consultation with curators and academics at large. This meant that while the Art Gallery of Ontario had a stated interest in making itself available for critical study in connection with the project, production of the series could proceed with the expectation of independence from the gallery's direction.

Such extra-institutional space for ongoing discussion is critical. There must be room, for instance, to interrogate the premises of both the workshop series and the present volume; to explore independent curatorial projects (both historical and contemporary) in relation to a community that deliberately contests the hegemony of the museum; to examine the belief that the museum popularizes what many academics, independent scholars and artist practitioners see as poor or inadequate research; or to question whether an overmandated provincial (or national) art museum has the intellectual orientation to properly service the historicization and interpretation of works of art of Native ancestry.[11] On the one hand, it could be argued that, since the introduction of Native North American visual culture to art galleries would fundamentally alter gallery representation of the history of art, it has real potential to affect the dominant discourses of art history. The history of Native North American art, as it has been written to date, is sensitive to gender, to identity, and to the larger field of cultural production in a way that settler history is not, but might well become under the more immediate influence of Aboriginal histories. On the other hand, there must also be room for a critical assessment of the implications of a project that situates representation not in the speaking, thinking subject – not in, for example, the Aboriginal curator, educator, or administrator, and the institutional (and institutionalizing) support offered by research fellowships and permanent positions – but rather in the "dumb" object and its display in the art gallery.

Such an assessment makes it apparent that to locate representation solely in collection and display is to practice an "imaginary" politics of representation: "not [a politics] opposed to the real but a politics which is manifestly a politics *of the image*" (Guillory 1993, 7). According to such a practice, which is as prevalent in cultural institutions in Canada and elsewhere, the idea of the representation or nonrepresentation of social groups is equated with the inclusion or exclusion of objects related to those groups: objects *stand for* specific social groups, subordinate or dominate (see also Jordanova 1989). A "representative" history of art or visual culture does not address the effects of social exclusion, or the lack of representation and access to power. In other words, it does not address Aboriginal access to the means of production and consumption, which, in this case, includes access to the production and consumption of histories, collections, exhibitions, and displays. In her 1991 report, Lee-Ann Martin pointed to the necessary relationship between the two, and suggested that the continuing absence of curators of Aboriginal descent would not be rectified until institutions moved beyond the "soft inclusion" of temporary exhibitions to "hard" collection and display. Since the completion of Martin's report, the Canada Council has initiated the First People's Curatorial Residency Program, which is designed to encourage the development of long-term employment opportunities for Aboriginal curators in Canadian cultural institutions, but despite the fact that the program has been in operation since 1997, permanent positions have not resulted. Even while there is increasing call for recognition that curators and educators of Aboriginal descent should not be isolated in their practice to Native arts, Aboriginal representation in the art gallery is lacking.

On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery

The present volume is intended to advance discussion both by stimulating exchange and by reactivating long-standing debates that have been closed down or idealized. In keeping with the structure of the workshop series from which it springs, the book is divided into six sections. Four sections relate to workshops that were held in both Toronto and Vancouver and contain essays written by panelists at both locations.[12] The other two sections relate to workshops that were held in only one of the two cities and include essays contributed by panelists at those sites: the Art Gallery of Ontario, with substantial holdings of Inuit art, hosted a workshop devoted to the understanding and display of Inuit work; the Vancouver Art Gallery, with its history of juxtaposing Aboriginal contemporary art with historical work by Euro-British Columbian artists, hosted a workshop on the relationship between settler and Native North American arts (see appendix). Earlier drafts of most of the panelists' essays were made available to participants so as to generate discussion around the workshop topics. They were also distributed before the sessions along with a program containing case studies based on the installations and collections of the two institutions at which the workshops were held. The case studies, in turn, have been used in the last part of this introduction both to describe each of the six sections of this book and to remind readers of how each workshop was originally framed.

The discussions that took place as a result of these preparatory efforts form the basis of the six "After Essays" included in this volume. Each workshop discussion leader has contributed an After Essay based both on the experience of events in Toronto and Vancouver and – to encourage review, reflection, and comparison – on audio recordings of the discussions.[13] These essays provide a record of the exchange that took place, either in the form of a summary, a synthesis, or a point of reference, or as a touchstone for further reflection by the discussion leader on some of the issues that were raised. Taken together, these "After Essays" also offer a set of observations, interpretations, and critical assessments of the discussion as a whole, and are thus intended to advance such discussion beyond the workshop series. This is also the aim of the Epilogue contributed by Clive Robertson, my colleague at Queen's University, who worked quietly with Shannon Bagg and me in the later stages of the project's development within the Queen's-AGO program. His critique of the project's terms of discussion is included in an effort to prevent the closure that is normally invoked in the concluding chapter of a book. In this sense, his contribution complements the six preceding sections.

The first section is introductory. It is devoted to the question of whether Aboriginal representation in the art gallery setting is a viable or appropriate way to afford Aboriginal histories, aesthetics, and expressive culture a place within the history of artistic production in Canada. Like the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario currently presents a history only of Euro-Canadian art, beginning in seventeenth-century New France. Although no historical narrative is followed explicitly, the installations at the Vancouver Art Gallery also feature the work of Euro-Canadians, with an emphasis on both historical and contemporary artists from the province of British Columbia. In both galleries, the prospect of displaying Aboriginal historical material alongside mainstream settler art of the same era poses certain challenges to conventional curatorial practices. Among these challenges is the fact that the representation of Aboriginal cultures in close proximity to the existing temporal and stylistic categories of Western art represents a serious challenge to the distinctly Euro-Canadian parameters that currently frame the history of artistic production in Canada. The purpose of this section, and the workshop that generated it, is to set the stage for the remaining topics by suggesting central premises for discussion.

The second section addresses specific issues surrounding the inclusion of historical Aboriginal arts in spaces with or alongside Euro-Canadian art of the same period. Some of these are suggested by the question that forms the title of the section: "Tourist Art and 'Craft' in the Gallery?". Other issues are made more concrete with the realization that, at present, in the Canadian historical wing of the Art Gallery of Ontario and in the Canadian installations at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Aboriginal historical cultures are represented almost exclusively in painting, sculpture, and graphics that were made by Euro-Canadians. One proposal for effecting change and for securing a presence at the Art Gallery of Ontario for Aboriginal cultures is the introduction of early Woodland material in exhibition spaces of Euro-Canadian art of the same period and region, including early work produced for the settler market. Similarly, historical examples of basketry and weaving from among Pacific Coast Aboriginal peoples might find a place in the Vancouver Art Gallery – just as contemporary pieces by Rena Point Bolton and Isabel Rorick appeared in the Vancouver Art Gallery's 1996 show, "Topographies: Aspects of Recent B.C. Art." One of the many challenges posed by this approach is the introduction of what have been called tourist or souvenir art and "craft" traditions into the gallery setting.

In the past, such objects were not seriously considered for collection by art galleries. This raises the question of whether there are practical alternatives to displaying only those isolated examples of historical work that currently reside in art gallery collections. The third section – "Depending on Donations" – suggests several avenues for discussion of problems raised by the fact that majority art museums in Canada do not own collections of historical work by Native North Americans. The Art Gallery of Ontario's installation of its collection of argillite carvings serves as a case in point. In spite of the lack of related material in the gallery, this collection is currently displayed in the gallery's Canadian historical wing. Notwithstanding the significance of the work itself or the importance of its inclusion in the history of mainstream Canadian or North American art, in the absence of any other Native North American historic material, these argillite model poles pose the danger of representing metonymically the whole artistic production of Pacific Coast Aboriginal peoples. How should this issue be addressed, if at all? As the essays in this section suggest, such problems raise issues that involve not only the construction of historical narratives, but also collecting and donation policies and institutional collaborations.

The fourth section – "Repositioning Inuit Art" – considers the presentation of the history of Inuit art in gallery settings with respect to the larger canon of Euro-American art. While the Vancouver Art Gallery does not have extensive holdings of Inuit work, the National Gallery of Canada, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and the Art Gallery of Ontario all house sizeable collections with permanent exhibition space allocated for Inuit sculpture and graphics. At the Art Gallery of Ontario, this space is contained in the Canadian historical wing where it forms part of a larger chronological arrangement of exhibition spaces – situated at mid-twentieth century to coincide with James Houston's introduction of soapstone carvings to the South in 1949. In recent years, however, with the approach of the so-called fiftieth anniversary of contemporary Inuit art, conventional understanding about Inuit art history – a series of eras marked by southern awareness or involvement – has been called into question. This section, which has been edited by Shannon Bagg, posits the necessity of rethinking the perspective from which Inuit art history is understood and presented in southern institutions, not only in terms of the history and future of the art itself, but also in relation to the larger Native North American and Euro-American art histories.

The fifth section – "Dispelling Affinities of the Tribal, the Modern, and the Contemporary" – also considers problems arising from the intersection of Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal art in a mainstream gallery setting, focusing on the danger of suggesting affinities between Aboriginal and settler art based on the primitivist tendencies of Euro-Canadian artists. At the Art Gallery of Ontario, for example, the work of Emily Carr, like that of the Group of Seven, is accorded privileged status, and occupies its own gallery. In an effort to move toward an integrated display of historical art in the Canadian wing, the gallery has proposed a reworking of the Emily Carr gallery that would integrate a display of Native work related to the 1927

"Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern." One consequence of displaying Northwest Coast Aboriginal material in or near the present display would be the danger of representing it in the service of or preparatory to Carr's work.

In this context, it is also important to consider how Aboriginal contemporary art can or should be presented in a gallery with respect to historical Aboriginal aesthetic traditions, mainstream settler art, and contemporary art internationally. Such questions are among the many raised in the sixth and final section – "The Contemporary Gallery in Context." At the Vancouver Art Gallery, for example, contemporary work by artists of Native descent is not situated explicitly within a historical narrative. Instead it is positioned either in relation to Carr's work (within a series of rotating installations that occupy the space devoted to art in British Columbia), or within the gallery's extensive collection of contemporary art. The Art Gallery of Ontario, in contrast, is in the process of incorporating Native artwork of the 1960s into its Canadian historical wing. In addition to re-situating works by Euro-Canadian artists such as Jack Shadbolt and Joyce Wieland, this approach involves the introduction of Aboriginal art (or, more specifically, the work of individual Aboriginal artists who came to prominence during the 1960s) into the Canadian historical wing. What should be the relationship, if any, between modern and contemporary Aboriginal art, or between contemporary Aboriginal art and Native historical work, in gallery spaces? The question is rich in related issues and points of debate, and as such, can be read in relation both to the essays in the final section and to all that come before. Of course, together with the rest of the collection the concluding essays can also be read as part of a larger, ongoing discussion on Aboriginal representation in the gallery, which is perhaps the best place to start. This introduction functions only in relation to a moment in that discussion and should end, appropriately, in recognition of that fact.

Notes

1. For a three-year period beginning in March 1996, the Visual Arts Section's Acquisition Assistance Program (which makes grants available on a matching funds basis to purchase works of Canadian contemporary visual art) offered "a special incentive" by waiving the matching funds requirement up to the amount of $10,000 for the purchase of works by First Peoples artists. According to a report to the Board of the Canada Council in November 1998, the "initiative proved extremely successful since only sixteen of the fifty-six galleries chose not to take advantage of this offer." The report concludes, "The Visual Arts Section expects, however, that, having done this initial groundwork to collect works by First Peoples artists, public galleries will continue this practice from 1999 on." My thanks to Claire McCaughey, Senior Research Officer, Canada Council for the Arts, for making this information available. For a discussion of the funding strategies that inform philanthropic and state support agencies in Canada, see Brison 1998.

2. Nineteen of the 145 pieces in the collection are now on display in the Canadian galleries at the Musée de beaux arts. My thanks to Rosalind Pepall, curator of decorative arts at the Musée, for bringing this to my attention.

3. See National Gallery of Canada Archives, 5.4-C, "Canadian Exhibitions/Foreign, Century of Canadian Art Exhibition 1938," f. 2: Brown to Massey, 16 June 1938; and Brown to J. B. Manson, Director and Keeper, Tate Gallery, 27 October 1937, respectively. This narrative was first published as a coherent history in Lismer 1926, 27–32. The first presentation "oversea" is claimed for the Tate Gallery exhibition by Vincent Massey, who notes in the foreword to the catalogue that by 1938 three such exhibitions of Canadian art had been held: "in England at Wembley in 1924 and 1925, and in Paris at the Musée du Jeu Paume in 1927," but that "these dealt mainly with contemporary work" (*A Century of Canadian Art* 1938, 6).

4. Some of the material offered to Brown for the National Gallery was purchased by the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. See University of Toronto Archives, T.F. McIlwraith Papers, B79-0011/001, Barbeau to McIlwraith, 13 July 1929; McIlwraith to Barbeau, 25 July and 13 August 1929; "Purchases from C.M. Barbeau (1929)." Barbeau also hoped to entice the Art Gallery of Ontario (then Art Gallery of Toronto) to collect Native art. (See Barbeau to McIlwraith, 29 September 1929.)

5. What constitutes visual culture studies has not yet been clearly defined, although it is recognized as an interdisciplinary field that is broader than art history. Descriptions of visual culture studies range from an enlargement of the types of visual productions conventionally open for consideration by art historians to the study of "visual realities (including the everyday habits of visual perception) as cultural constructs" (Mitchell 1995a, 207). See Mitchell 1995a, 1995b; Mirzoeff 1998, 1999; Rogoff 1998; Shohat and Stam 1998; Elkins 1999.

6. See Task Force on Museums and First Peoples 1992, 4, 5–6; Doxtator 1996, 65; Webster 1992; Clifford 1991; and Tom Hill in this volume. The desirability of a distanced position was advanced strongly at the workshop series in Toronto by Kanatakta, executive director of the Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center in Kahnawake, who, with Marie-Paule Robitaille of the Musée de la civilisation in Québec, led the wrap-up session.

7. See *Native Perspective* 1978, Young Man 1988, Hill 1989. The first National Native Artists' symposium was held on Manitoulin Island in 1978, the second at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, University of Regina in 1979, and the third in Ksan in 1983. The "National Native Artists' Symposium IV" took place at the University of Lethbridge in 1987, and the National Native Artists' symposium "A Gathering in Honour of Our Teachers, Elders, and Those Who Have Gone before Us" was held in Halifax in 1993. The most recent National Native Artists' symposium, "Gathering," was held with the sponsorship of SCANA and the Eastern Artists' Collective on 8–11 December 2000. My thanks to Jim Logan for bringing this to my attention.

8. See Phillips 1993b, Podedworny 1993, Rushing 1993, Watson 1993. Catalogues were published in conjunction with all three shows; see McMaster and Martin 1992, Nemiroff, Houle, and Townsend-Gault 1992; Tétreault and Williams 1992.

9. "Glenbow gets Native objects despite attempted boycott," *Canadian Churchman* 113 (May 1987):15; Mark Lowey, "Indians want artifacts returned," *Calgary Sunday Herald Entertainment* 10 January 1988: E 1; "Quebec Mohawks in court to reclaim sacred artifacts from Olympic exhibit," *Gazette* (Montréal) 15 January 1988: B 3; Kevin Cox, "Native groups want artifacts pulled from show," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto) 15 January 1988: A 4; "Indians launch lawsuit

over Olympic art festival," *Toronto Star* 15 January 1988: A 10; "Indians threaten court action to reclaim artifacts on display," *Winnipeg Free Press* 15 January 1988: 14; "Court orders Indian mask withdrawn," *Winnipeg Free Press* 16 January 1988: 11; Ken Riddell, "The Spirit Sings – but is it off key?" Marketing 29 February 1988: 1, 3; Arnold Edinborough, "Glenbow exhibit shows rich tradition of Native artistry," *Financial Post* 82 (11 April 1988): 22; Jane Evans, "The Spirit Sings," *New West* 13 (April 1988): 9-11; "Share the blame," transcribed dialogue between Michael Ames and Bruce Trigger from the CBC program "Morningside," broadcast 15 January 1988, *Vanguard* (April/May 1988); Arnold Edinborough, "Exhibition an exaltation of Native artistry," *Canadian Churchman* 114 (May 1988): 15; Richard Bernstein, "Anthropologist's beliefs shaken after visit to land where he studied 30 years before," *Whig-Standard* 14 May 1988: 28; "Museum won't show holy mask," *Vancouver Sun* 18 May 1988; Larry Scanlan, Review of "The Spirit Sings: Artistic traditions of Canada's First Peoples," *Equinox*, no. 31 (May/June 1988): 19-20; "Controversial Native exhibit opens in Ottawa," *Gazette* (Montréal) 1 July 1988; Mark Abley, "The Spirit Sings a subtly political show," *Gazette* (Montréal) 9 July 1988: D 6; Moira Simpson, "Celebration, Commemoration, or Condemnation," *Museums Journal* 92 (March 1992): 28-31. See also *MUSE* 1988, Phillips 1990, Nicks 1992, Harrison 1993, Hill 1993. A catalogue was published in conjunction with the exhibition; see Glenbow Museum 1987.

10. This concern only with the representation of contemporary production in the art museum reveals an assumption that the history of artistic production would be told elsewhere. See also Houle and Podedworny 1994, 2.

11. In an evaluation of the "crises of purpose" and the attendant internal critiques that have also come to characterize academic disciplines and their university departments in recent decades, Will Straw raises a note of caution: "by invoking their past importance and power to justify the urgency and prioritizing of their own projects of internal transformation, [they] are often able to maintain their institutional privilege" (Straw 1993, 90). The same might be said of the cultural institutions under discussion here. Thus acceptance of their ongoing relevance should be acknowledged as one of the premises of discussion.

12. Aldona Jonaitis and Andrea Walsh agreed to contribute papers as panelists in Vancouver, but in the end both were unable to attend. Their papers are included here.

13. Although Jolene Rickard was present in Toronto, she was subsequently unable to attend the Vancouver session, and has based her essay in this volume on audio recordings of that discussion. I thank Morgan Wood for stepping in at the last moment to act as discussion leader in her stead.

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On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery

Our (Inter) Related History

Gerald McMaster

Did you know that 800 years ago an Inuit artist depicted a Norseman, and that this small sculpture is in Ottawa?

Did you know that the words "Canada," "Yukon," "Saskatchewan," "Manitoba," "Ontario," and "Quebec" are all Aboriginal names?

Did you know that beginning with the War of 1812 Aboriginal people have participated in armed conflict alongside other Canadians?

I would like to discuss not Aboriginal art history but rather our "interrelated history," which I argue is fundamental to Canadian identity. I want to consider a history between us that is older than Confederation, older than Cartier's landing, a history that may be a thousand years old. As well, I want to consider how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people exchanged, struggled, and looked at each other – how we all contributed to this country. In the end, I believe there is a basis for developing such a historical perspective through visual art.

How, then, is our history interrelated? First, the familiar version of Canadian history begins around 1534 when Jacques Cartier landed on the upper shores of the St. Lawrence River. From that time on, contact has been continuous across Canada. But this was not the earliest instance of contact. Around the turn of the last millennium (1000 A.D.) Norsemen arrived in Northeastern North America. Although their stay was short, they tried to establish settlements. Evidence of Norse houses can be seen today at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland. We know from written records that the local Aboriginal people the Norse called *Skraelings* (little people) were likely people of the Dorset culture. In the early 1980s a group of American archaeologists discovered what I believe is one of the most significant finds marking the beginning of our related history – a tiny wooden figurine, about three to four inches high, the first depiction of a European by an Inuit artist. The figure appears to be wearing a full-length coat or robe and on his chest is an incision in the shape of a cross. This carving dates to about the thirteenth century. The history of Canada in the period between the arrival of the Norseman and Cartier is an Aboriginal history. It is not until the sixteenth century that we return to our shared Aboriginal and European destiny.

Among the historians who have explored the earliest relationships between Aboriginal people and Europeans are Olive Dickason in *Canada's First Nations* (1997), Michel Noël in *The Native People of Quebec* (1997), Bruce G. Trigger in *The Children of Aataentsic* (1976), and Robert McGhee in *Canadian Arctic Prehistory* (1978). These historians have examined early moments of contact and point out that objects and ideas were freely exchanged between parties in a reciprocal relationship. Trade and barter of goods such as furs for metals and fish for cloth resulted in cultural change. Intermarriage produced a new cultural, political and linguistic group known as the Métis. Languages came into constant contact; words such as *toboggan*, *moccasin*, *kayak*, *Toronto*, and *Ottawa* have crossed into mainstream English and French. Ever since the sixteenth century Aboriginal people have taken and used trade materials, refashioning them for new uses and aesthetic tastes. Metal tools, for example, allowed Haida artists to carve argillite with supreme delicacy and wood with greater monumentality.[1]

Conflicts and struggles occurred with such frequency that before 1763 both sides agreed to new accords known as "Peace and Friendship Treaties." During this time, individual tribes and European nations formed alliances, evident in the languages of the French-speaking Huron and English-speaking Iroquois. As well, power shifted from the First Nations first to the French, and then to the British, as colonization swept the continent. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 issued by the British Crown served to protect, or "reserve" for Indians lands that were not already ceded to the British. From then on, treaties focused not on "peace and friendship," but rather on the relinquishment of land in exchange for government protection, annuities, education, and so on. These treaties were known as "Land Cession" treaties. Although power shifted, interrelations continued, albeit in the new form of colonizer/colonized. Another less well-known alliance began when First Nations fought alongside other Canadians in the War of 1812. This has continued throughout the twentieth century, as individual men and women enlisted in every war and peacekeeping campaign in which Canada has participated.

From a curatorial perspective, the eighteenth century, with its exchanges, alliances, and wars, provides exciting possibilities for juxtaposing objects. Several great paintings depict our interrelated history. In Benjamin West's *The Death of Wolfe* (National Gallery of Canada) we see the British and Algonquin battling together against the French. Consider this work in relation to the late-nineteenth-century Iroquoian war club given to William Johnson. This war club, currently held by the Canadian Museum of

Civilization, depicts Native and non-Native men extending their hands in peace and friendship. Here we see a blend of art and history.

A more interesting avenue for curators to explore is the dialogical relation of objects. During the entire period of interrelations the quality and quantity of art and craftwork has been constantly shifting as new commodities replaced traditional Native products. Aboriginal people have found lucrative markets in the tourist trade particularly since the latter part of the nineteenth century. In her recent publication, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900* (1998), Ruth B. Phillips explores the intersection of Natives and non-Natives in Canadian social history and art history. Her groundbreaking study vividly illustrates the richness and complexity of the inextricable histories of our country.

The significance of Aboriginal art in the history of Canadian identity has been established, and we are also beginning to recognize the benefits of identifying with this Aboriginal heritage. Canadians have turned to Aboriginal people for signs and symbols in proclaiming our heritage to the world. Historically, the Plains Indian was the preferred image, but more recently Inuit and Northwest Coast cultures have provided predominant referents to Canada. As a result, Inuit art, and to a lesser extent Indian art, are becoming increasingly significant in our national and regional art galleries. Yet, Aboriginal art histories continue to be treated independently of Euro-Canadian art history.

Although our Canadian heritage and identity are articulated through our national and regional institutions of culture, our interrelatedness has only been explored in one early innovative exhibition. For about four decades beginning in 1913, the National Gallery of Canada and the National Museum of Man (now the Canadian Museum of Civilization) were co-occupants of the old Victoria Memorial Museum Building in Ottawa. For a brief time, both institutions focused on the same objective: to represent Canadian nationalism and the development of a national cultural identity. This idea was represented in the celebrated 1927 "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern." The next exhibition to combine works of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists did not happen until 1984, when the Art Gallery of Ontario presented "From the Four Quarters: Native and European Art in Ontario, 5000 B.C. to 1867 A.D." To my knowledge, these exhibitions are the only two to feature our interrelated history. Since the separation of the National Gallery and the National Museum in the 1950s, scant attention has been paid to the construction of a truly inclusive national art history that examines this interrelatedness.

With this rich history, we can no longer think and work apart. At the Canadian Museum of Civilization, various disciplines are working to present their particular stories and competing over space for recognition. On the one hand, the Canada

Hall tells visitors that Canadian history began with the arrival of the Norse; on the other hand, the First Peoples Hall tells a story that begins after the last Ice Age. (If you are Ojibwa, Cree, or Blackfoot, the story begins with the great flood, when the culture hero saved the animals and created the earth.) In the same building, we have two separate halls presenting Canadian history from two separate perspectives. Until the summer of 2000, I worked alongside curators from several disciplinary fields on the First Peoples Hall project to develop a complex Aboriginal story. As an Aboriginal person, I have difficulty relating to the Canada Hall because I see very little evidence of Aboriginal history. Conversely, many non-Aboriginal visitors may feel the same way about the First Peoples Hall. I agree that there are many stories to tell, but what is the best way to tell these stories?

In contrast to museums, art galleries can be at the forefront of these challenges. I am not asking "Is there an Aboriginal art history?" This is a moot point. The point of this essay, and perhaps the underlying point of this book, is that there is a much more complex Canadian art history that needs to be told. My hope is that we can recognize the significance of questioning our disconnected histories and look for some kind of unity. Dennis Reid and Joan Vastokas's exhibition, "From the Four Quarters," touched on the idea of interrelationship, and the accompanying catalogue (Reid and Vastokas 1984) includes an art historical analysis of interrelations through an examination of objects. Reid and Vastokas's text provides a working template from which we can draw inspiration; no doubt, other texts now being written in Canada and other settler nations can also inspire us in the development of a new and creative ordering of Canadian art history.

I hope I have begun to persuade you of the need to pursue the concept of our interrelated art history. I am proposing an art history created through the historical analysis of interrelations, the result of which will be a new discursive space. A new Canadian art history in art galleries is long overdue.[2] Particular periods and eras of interrelationship can be brought together in most engaging ways. Imagine an exhibition of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal art in which the theme is nineteenth-century Canadian identity as portrayed through diversity. What about a room that presents different points of view – for example interpretations of early-twentieth-century northern Ontario landscapes by both the Group of Seven and Ojibwa beadworkers? What about an exhibit that brings together works examining our views of one another under the theme "Visualities"?

In the past, I have argued for an Aboriginal art history, but I now see this as a spatial and intellectual divide. Let me illustrate, by way of metaphors, why I think the argument for a separate history is misplaced. There is a familiar Iroquoian symbol called the "Two-Row Wampum." It is a simple design of two parallel lines that never touch or cross, but when it is interpreted by a skilled orator a complex story comes alive. As the Iroquois tell it, the belt signifies Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, each riding down a river in their boats, respecting each other's space and way of life. If we were to use this symbol as a model for discussion, we would still be travelling down the river separately, not knowing each other. Our institutional structures of culture – museums and galleries – would remain dichotomous. A contrasting model is suggested by the double helix DNA molecule. The double helix is somewhat like the two-row wampum with the difference that the two strands of the double helix spiral upwards and are connected by rungs, like a ladder. If the strands represent temporality and the rungs spatiality, then the parallel, spiralling strands can signify contemporaneous periods, while the rungs are its discursive effects – material, linguistic, social, political, economic, and aesthetic – that affect/effect the object. In this model there is continuous dialogue, debate, and struggle. Like the DNA molecule this is the constituent part of who we are. This is how I see our interrelatedness.

Our interrelated history is greater than Confederation or Jacques Cartier. Although Aboriginal history is many thousands of years older and far more complex, our interrelated history as Canadians is a thousand years old. During this time we have traded in materials and ideas, lived and struggled together, pictured each other differently, and contributed to this country. Unfortunately our art history does not reflect these facts or ideas.

I believe we must begin to think like Eric Brown and Marius Barbeau when they set about creating "The Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern" in 1927. Today we have a strong network of curators and intellectuals who can build upon their vision. Why not continue and extend their idea? Why not position Aboriginal historic works alongside other contemporary historic works to show an interrelated perspective? Using the concept of an interrelated art history as our guideline is much like working, living, playing, and arguing together over one purpose – to show our Canadian art history.

Notes

1. There are many negative aspects to interrelations, especially in the last two hundred years: institutionalized religion, church-run boarding schools, incarceration of political prisoners, government Indian policies, and new diseases that exterminated massive numbers of Aboriginal people. The social and political aspects of interrelations should be of interest to history museums, while cultural aspects are more appropriate for galleries.
2. The Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, New York, is the only institution I know that regularly presents thematic exhibitions in which Aboriginal art is juxtaposed with folk and fine art.

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A First Nations Perspective

The AGO or the Woodland Cultural Centre?

Tom Hill

It is interesting to observe that in the traditional languages there is no word for "art." Few Aboriginal art forms had no established function in daily life. To the North American Indian, everything made served a purpose; the idea of hanging a painting on a wall or mounting a sculpture on a pedestal just to admire it was completely foreign. Almost everything made was decorated in some way; religious or spiritual articles were often characterized by more inventive artistic interpretations than secular objects were. Where the environment afforded more leisure time, as in the case of the Northwest Coast or the Eastern Woodland, secular art objects became highly developed artistically and were well integrated into society. Haida artist Bill Reid asserts that since there is no word for art in Aboriginal languages, people of the past had no appreciation of the formal elements of their creations; they had no aesthetic criteria by which to distinguish good work from bad, and they were not moved by excellence and beauty (Reid 1990). It seems to me, however, that no artists, in these societies or in any others, could have produced the great works they did without formal appreciation and a critical public.

The history of these arts, from prehistoric times to the present, is yet to be written, but we do know that in nineteenth-century British North America, the ceremonial arts were in rapid decline as a result of both Christian missionary activity and the 1874 assimilationist policies of the newly-formed Canadian government. The long and sacred traditions that were the roots of ceremonial art ebbed to an unprecedented low as artists passively accepted Euro-Canadian aesthetic tastes, culture, and established order. What did flourish was crafted art. From almost the beginning of European contact, it was the habit of travellers visiting Indian groups to collect souvenirs. The Indians were quick to realize the commercial potential of this tourist trade and soon started making articles specifically for this purpose.

In most cases, the evolution from crafted art into commercial product began in the nineteenth century, although there were items that were part of the fur trade in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The argillite carving by the Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands was one of the first crafted arts that was conceived and developed during the mid nineteenth century totally for a white market. Victorian whimsies, elaborately beaded curios, baskets, carved wooden ladles and spoons, and steatite carvings are just a few examples of crafted arts made in Canada. Many of these arts were the direct outcome of well-intentioned philanthropic organizations such as the Women's Art Association of Montreal, the Canadian Handicraft Guild, the Society for the Furtherance of British Columbia Indian Arts and Crafts, the Victoria Arts and Crafts Society, and the Women's University Club in Victoria. The crafted arts that flowed through these organizations were usually analyzed in European terms as primitive art or even folk art and, in most instances, were directly linked to some commercial outlet. The crafted arts negated individualism, encouraged a collective ethnicity, and were generally annexed to the European cultural tradition (Hill 1985, 1992; McMaster 1989; Phillips 1998).

Also during the nineteenth century, as Aboriginal peoples were displaced from their lands and livelihood, Canadian collectors and museums began to collect the material culture that gave rise to a new social science. Anthropology lent credibility to collecting and justified investment in museums. Ethnocentric bias reinforced the notion that cultures evolved from primitive to civilized or, more fundamentally, the idea that science and scholarship – rather than faith, experience, or imagination – were key to understanding those cultures. This historical narrative must be followed explicitly in our art galleries if we are to include Aboriginal representation.

In her article, "If Art Is the Answer, What Is the Question?," Charlotte Townsend-Gault argues convincingly that such sensitivity to the politics of the object is important in any consideration of Native visual culture. She suggests that "objects as representations" are insinuated into the present "precisely because of their contested status – as symbols, as treasures, as representations, as property, as art, as ethnographica – and that objects-as-representations are at the flash points of identity politics, cultural debates and confrontations. Furthermore," she argues, "a large part of their present significance lies in a challenge to colonialist authority, the assertion of survival, the demand for response and the provocation to action." In other words, there is a "highly articulate relationship between the visual manifestations of native cultures and contemporary social relations" (1994, 101).

This in turn presents certain challenges to the representation of Aboriginal cultures in close proximity to the history of Euro-Canadian artistic production. One good

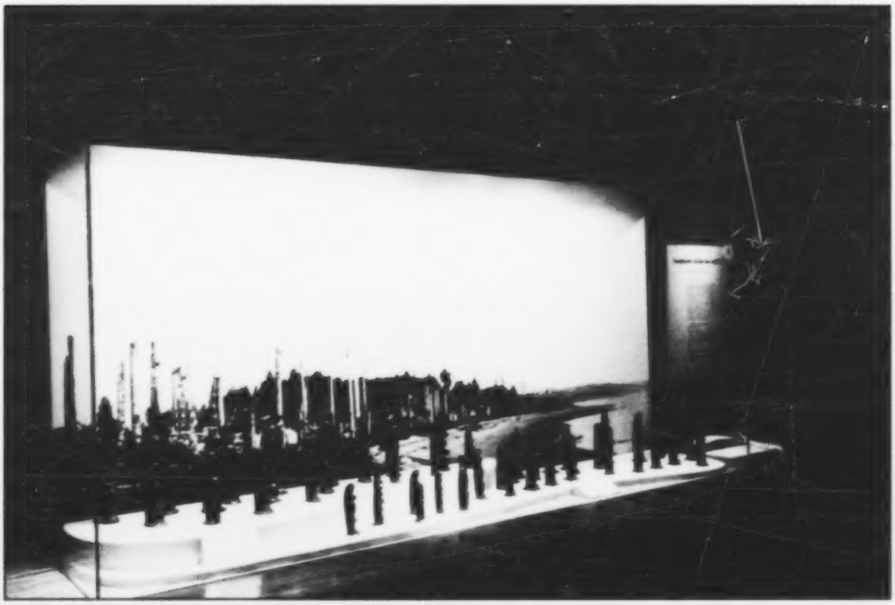

Figure 3

"British Columbia: Haida Argillite Carving," Georgia Ridley Gallery link, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2000. Installation photograph. The display, one of three "Sculptural Highlights from Late 19th-Century Canada," contains model poles attributed to Charles Edenshaw and Issac Chapman. The backdrop is an archival photograph of Old Massett in 1878. Photograph: Art Gallery of Ontario.

example can be seen in the small argillite gallery at the Art Gallery of Ontario (fig. 3). This gallery – sandwiched between a room designed as a salon, with paintings mounted from floor to ceiling to suggest a British North American academy-like setting, and an installation devoted to the ecclesiastical sculpture tradition of French Canada – consists of fifty miniature poles by Haida carvers Charles Edenshaw and Issac Chapman set dramatically against an archival photograph of Old Massett, a Haida village (fig. 4). The salon paintings, products of a Western academic art tradition supported by paradigms centred on science, reassert the place of the curator – in this case Dennis Reid – as final arbiter of Western notions of excellence. In turn, these Western ideas of artistic excellence – reflected as they are in the series of decisions Reid has made in the gallery – are applied to the argillite cravings by their association with the other works in the wing.

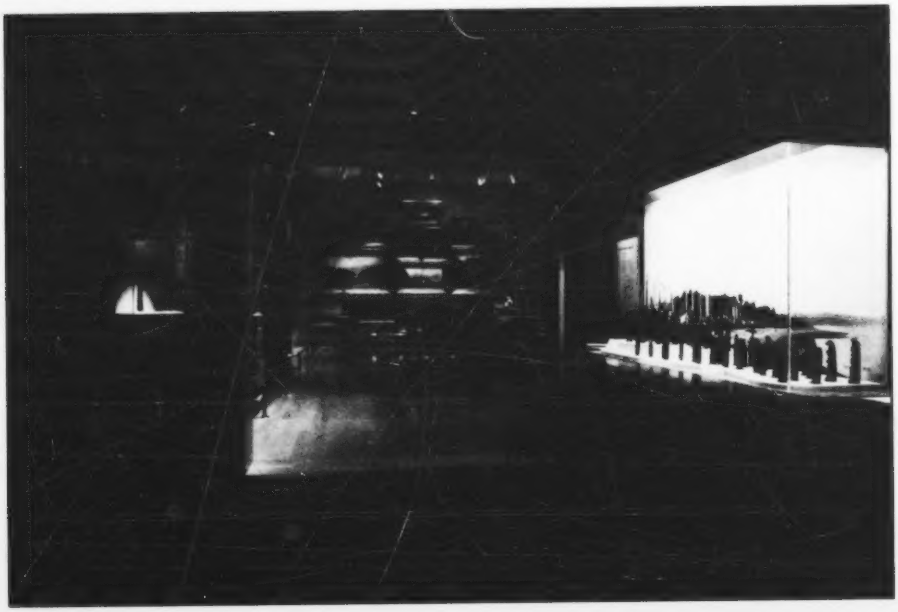

Figure 4
"British Columbia: Haida Argillite Carving," Georgia Ridley Gallery link, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2000. Installation photograph. View from the link to the Georgia Ridley Gallery showing the argillite installation at the right. Photograph: Art Gallery of Ontario.

If I were a casual visitor to the gallery, I would wonder about the scale of these argillite poles against the decorative archival photograph behind them showing totem poles in a Haida village. Because the installation says nothing about the process of commoditization that produced the miniature poles, it gives the impression that the poles were meant to be toy-like and that their miniaturization was the result of some (unexplained) function they served in Native life. Is it not the responsibility of the curator to present the Aboriginal or Native point of view? The archival backdrop and the reference in the accompanying text to the Scottish-born missionary who collected the works do not provide enough context for the carvings. The dominant view among anthropologists, and perhaps among art historians, is that the meaning of art is determined by its context; to view art otherwise is to distort it (Ames 1992, 71). According to Marnie Fleming, a non-context exhibit is a form of appropriation and therefore constitutes an exploitation of the peoples whose work is being displayed. In other words, to display Aboriginal art out of context is immoral (Fleming 1982).

We must challenge our audiences to accept the context of this art. We need to reinforce the idea that people of the Northwest Coast may not have had words for fine art in the Western sense but that their art-making nonetheless clearly manifests high aesthetic standards, individual interpretation and virtuosity. The fact that their art was at first commercial – an offshoot of scrimshaw – will probably not comply with the limited standards prescribed by the traditional art patron. Haida argillite carvings were made specifically for the growing tourist trade. Ironically, at the same time that argillite carving was becoming successful, the Canadian potlatch law banning ceremonial traditions was being enforced.

I applaud Reid in taking risks with the argillite gallery. Curatorial practice is really about critical interrogation of the concepts and terms in which we locate our practice. Art Gallery of Ontario director Matthew Teitelbaum probably best summed up what we do as curators in his statement that curating is a process of learning in public and that we live in a world of questions (Hill 1996, 31). But can we do better? I suspect not. Not until a neutral gallery space is established for First Nations art.

The Woodland Cultural Centre may be a First Nations institution *for* First Nations, but because the building was originally a church-run residential school, it is already loaded with excessive baggage. It is probably the only museum in Canada that has had to institute a support-counselling program for former students returning to the site to convince them that they are welcome to come in to see an exhibit. Like other art institutions, our museum has also been experiencing under-funding, renovations, professionalization of staff, increasing cost of acquisitions, and high cost of exhibitions. But, at the same time, our museum staff has remained involved (perhaps more than in other institutions in our community) in these philosophical and ideological issues, debating them, and trying to overcome controversies arising from our heightened sensitivity to the function of First Nations art in contemporary society. At the Woodlands Cultural Centre we have experienced all these developments – and controversies – as a museum. But how did we become the centre of these controversies? Let me brief you on our history.

The Woodland Cultural Centre is a non-profit organization established in 1972 and funded by the National Cultural Centres Program in Ottawa. We offer programs through four departments: Language, Education, Library, and Museum. With more than 25,000 artifacts accessioned in its collections, the Museum is one of the largest facilities in Canada that is managed and administered by First Nations. The museum holdings include archaeological specimens, ethnographic material, historical material, furniture, fine crafts, documents, paintings, sculptures, photographs, graphics, and installation pieces. The permanent collection consists of archaeological and ethnographic material while the special exhibitions program for our temporary gallery hosts exhibitions encompassing themes of art, history, science, and popular culture.

The Centre was established during the rise in political activism that characterized the early 1970s. Museums in Canada that had considered themselves above criticism came under attack from First Nations politicians, traditionalists, and cultural leaders. Much of the criticism was directed against anthropological museums and the display of skeletal remains, but art galleries that had neglected First Nations art also came under fire. In fact, it was not until 1984, when the Art Gallery of Ontario presented the exhibition, "Norval Morrisseau and the Emergence of the Image Makers," that some of the ensuing arguments were finally put to rest. The show was a success, but there was a lot of political fury both behind the scenes at the Art Gallery of Ontario and in the press.

Because most public art galleries in Canada have their origins in private collections, there is an association with a high level of personal culture. In the modernist era, contemporary art curators within the hierarchically-constructed world of art museums were secure in their power to research, to speak, to interpret, and to exclude. For the most part, their audiences believed that art was unchanging, apolitical, and ahistorical, and that curators need not be concerned with the shifting socio-political realities that existed outside the museum walls. As postmodernism took hold, curatorial practices increasingly came under critical scrutiny, driven by a multitude of discourses often founded in ideologies centred on issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Many of these ideologies, particularly those affecting First Nations art, were born in "local knowledge" centred in reserve communities (Hill 1996). Issues of curatorial practice arose through the programs offered at Woodland Cultural Centre, whose mission was to maintain a healthy tension between traditional values and contemporary innovation.

The Woodland Cultural Centre has offered positive alternatives to negative stereotypes, and has stressed the richness, depth, and adaptability of First Nations culture. Some of our exhibits have attacked problems of identity and related them to endemic First Nations social problems. "Fired Earth – *Ode:geh o'da*" (1998) an exhibit of ceramics, explored the myth of a single political identity shared by all potters. "Fluffs and Feathers" (1989), a popular culture exhibit, explored stereotypes and the notion of "Indianness." "*Go di'nigoha*, the Women's Mind" (1997), curated by Lynn Hill and the late Deborah Doxtator, examined the Iroquoian intellectual tradition. Other exhibitions, in conjunction with cultural education initiatives, have provided First Nations peoples with information about themselves that had been forgotten or almost lost. For example, since our exterior grounds were originally a residential school, we asked artists to do work that might address some of these issues for "We're Still Here," a planned exhibition and conference to be held in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Brant. We are also planning to hold workshops with the community in conjunction with "Emergence from the Shadow: First Peoples' Photographic Perspectives" (1999), a touring exhibition from the Canadian Museum of Civilization that features historical photographs taken on the Six Nations Reserve but, until recently, lost to our community.

Such partnership and collaboration with other galleries offers both a solution to issues surrounding funding and a way to open the door to other perspectives. My curatorial experience has been marked by the constant interrogation of the real world in order to find a balance in my practice between local concerns and the new internationalism. Partnerships have been a solution to this problem. We must also find space for critical engagement. Carl Beam, the contemporary Ojibwe artist states, "My guides have been the wise men of tradition who interpret reality and get hold of meaningful things. They created their own methodologies, certain medicines, certain states of consciousness. They survived by interpreting reality" (quoted in McLuhan 1984, 9).

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First Nations and Art Museums

Aldona Jonaitis

In a museum the only thing that endures unchanged is the physical existence of the objects. This is as true for First Nations art as it is for Renaissance drawings, Chinese ceramics, or Amish quilts. All other factors that contribute to the complex phenomenon of an object within a museum are variable. The creator of a work of art lived during a particular period and in a particular place, and adhered to cultural traditions that, more than likely, differ from those of contemporary museum visitors. The object had a specific meaning in the culture that created it and used it, but that meaning is not necessarily the same as the meaning this object – which has been traded, sold, given, purchased, or collected – carries today. If a piece was of sufficient importance (such importance, of course, varied over time) writers referred to it in notes, essays, or books. It might have made its way into a museum, which, as a cultural institution existing in a particular period and place, imposed yet other meanings on it – meanings that may or may not have resonated with those of the maker, acquirer, or critic. The piece may also travel to an exhibit in another city, or even another country; thus it assumes both a local and a global context. Much as we might wish that a Haida rattle, a Nuu-chah-nulth mask, or a Chilkat robe would remain eternally one with its First Nations creators, embodying its original meaning for all who gaze at it, this simply does not happen. Artworks – like the cultures from which they emerge – have histories that refuse to remain static.

Because they function as central elements in a complex process, artworks within museums are not merely items that hang on walls or stand on pedestals. Michael Baxandall (1991) identifies values, ideas, and purposes for three groups of players in this process. One group is the creators – those of the culture from which the artwork came. The other two groups – the museum curators and staff, and the viewers – contribute just as much to the meaning of an artwork within a museum. I would add three more groups of players to this model: the collectors or purchasers of the work, the historians and critics who analyze it, and the "imagined community" who values it.

Seemingly unrelated and even contradictory meanings and events affect an artwork. A useful way to understand the exhibition process is to consider it as a kind of "wrapping." Over time, new levels of meaning and other referents wrap the original object so as to create a new entity, a two-or-more-part whole with resonance between component parts. The wrapping of an artwork – by collecting and exhibiting, by written and pictorial descriptions, by reactions over time, and by its presence within a building – creates a composite that is considerably different from the original, an entity that is both richer and of greater historical consequence than is acknowledged in the conventional presentation of an artwork as a composition of form and color. This ever-expanding web of interconnected elements constantly modifies the essence of any artwork.

A major influence on our experience of an artwork is the particular museum in which it resides. The number of museums worldwide has been growing steadily and so has the number of critiques of museums. Studies done since the 1980s have examined the role of museums in reproducing class hierarchies and colonialism (that is, how they represent the cultural products of the elite, of minorities, and of Aboriginal people), the functions of museums within the larger society, and the institutional histories of museums (including methods of acquiring objects and collections). Such studies have clarified the unique nature of museums and have identified inherent problems that must be addressed.[1] This literature can be roughly divided into critiques of ethnographic displays and critiques of art exhibits.

A great deal has been written about the presentation of First Nations material in ethnographic institutions, but there is relatively little literature on such material in art museums. In this essay, I concentrate on Aboriginal works that can be called "traditional" – that is, those works made for use within the community or as "curios" for visitors. In Canada, few art galleries exhibit this kind of art; one minor exception is the small collection of Haida argillite at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In contrast, several art museums in the United States – including the Seattle Art Museum, the Denver Art Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and the Detroit Museum of Art – have halls of Native American art. Even the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City includes a few First Nations pieces among the African and Oceanic art displayed in the Rockefeller Wing. These U.S. art museums and galleries exhibit First Nations works separately from other Canadian or American art, highlighting their non-mainstream nature. Marcia Tucker (1992) has described the unwillingness of museums to present Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal art on a completely equal basis "the art-apartheid system." History has proved that the phrase "separate but equal" is an oxymoron; as long as First Nations art remains segregated from other types of art, it will not be perceived as equal by those who visit museums.

Art museums – which for years welcomed educated, well-bred visitors and discouraged attendance by the so-called "masses" – have been charged with irresponsible elitism. Bringing First Nations art into their galleries is one way to increase the inclusiveness of these institutions. Interestingly, art museums were once far more welcoming to the general public. After the Civil War, American museums presented art exhibitions intentionally designed to educate people about art. However, by the beginning of the twentieth century, art museums began to identify more firmly with the upper classes. Their audiences narrowed to those who understood art history and could perceive, understand, and appreciate the unique nature of "art." Access to museums became increasingly restricted as public education dropped in priority. Lower-class visitors rarely came to art museums, and those who came did not feel especially welcome.[2] In recent years, museums have been making increased efforts to encourage a more diverse clientele; one manifestation of this is an effort to widen the spectrum of art beyond the Euro-American tradition to embrace other cultures.

Museums create knowledge by addressing those concepts deemed as relevant and omitting other concepts. Because museums represent a significant level of cultural authority, their version of information is particularly powerful. Ever since museums emerged from their cabinet-of-curiosity infancy, they have functioned as agents of classification, presenting the grand narratives of the Enlightenment as revealed in assemblages of artworks. Until quite recently, works by members of the First Nations were usually exhibited as artifacts in natural history museums.[3] As postmodernism began to challenge those narratives and the classifications upon which they were based, art history also began to reassess the nature of its messages, considering alternate histories and classifications, and embracing previously excluded arts – among them works by Aboriginals, women, and minorities, including categories such as "craft," "folk" or "popular." In response to both the changing nature of art history and contemporary intellectual mores, art museums attempted to become more inclusive.

One legacy of the shift of art museums from public education to a more restricted mission is the minimalist interpretation of artworks on exhibit: labels that provide little more information than the artist's name and the title and date of the work. Some museum professionals believe interpretation is simply not needed because art transcends the commonplace and "speaks" a universal language that is understood by all. Herein lies a major problem. Tony Bennett (1995, 164) points out that while the actual *object* is visible to all, that which turns it into *art* is not so evident. Indeed, only those with proper training can "see" this invisible quality. A study conducted in Europe by Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel (1991), which examined the behavior of visitors with different levels of education in museums, demonstrates the class-based nature of art appreciation. Highly educated visitors know their art history and prefer to visit galleries either alone or in small groups. Middle-level professionals obtain further information about the art on display by seeking out docents and reading guidebooks. Lower-class visitors feel unsettled and intimidated by the museum's solemnity, and so neither ask questions nor seek out docents. This study made it evident that under-educated people do not always understand the "universal language" of art. Appreciation of art and comfort in its presence comes not from some mystical quality in a work but from the education of the viewer. Critic Douglas Crimp (1993, 286–8) urges art museums to include social, political, or historical details in their interpretations of works on display.

Traditional art history focuses on connoisseurship and represents a cultural history that is neat and supposedly universally valid. Crimp is one of the many "new art historians" who have challenged the twin assumptions of art history: that there is a universally accepted canon that defines great art, and that art emerges from a progressive sequence of ever-inventive art movements. Contemporary scholars study the social aspects of artworks, deconstruct their history, and embrace art created by previously-excluded groups, including women and marginalized peoples, such as First Nations.

A study of the vast majority of art museums reveals that few have followed Crimp's challenge. Both Carol Duncan (1995, 102–3) and Alan Wallach (1998) note that the revisionist art history prevalent in universities today is less evident in museums – especially large institutions, which tend to resist new perspectives on art and art history and oppose innovations in art display. Wallach (1998, 6) suggests that some museum personnel are afraid that innovative exhibits will demystify art by disregarding aesthetics and denying the transcendental aesthetic. But surely a thorough analysis covering not just the aesthetic qualities but all the dimensions of an artwork would enhance rather than detract from a viewer's appreciation of that work.

Contemporary critical thought challenges essentialist and grand narratives, promotes the dissolution of rigid categories, fosters a more welcoming attitude toward hybrids, and resists the types of hierarchies that characterize modernism. Art museums can exhibit collections in ways that are informed by these ideas while not actually explaining them and, by so doing, communicate new ways of thinking about culture to the non-specialist. Traditional art museum displays embraced racist and classist hierarchies by featuring works within the Euro-American artistic canon and excluding anything outside it. By exhibiting First Nations art alongside more traditional types of art, museums can subtly expand their visitors' concepts of the range of artistic creativity and offer a more nuanced understanding of how objects come to be known as art.

Exhibitions that include First Nations work alongside other art can also reinforce current efforts to recognize, analyze, and celebrate the local. Although much First Nations art has remained with its creators, many artworks have been exhibited internationally, and thus have assumed a place within the sphere of global culture. Because of this, I argue that exhibits of First Nations art should also become more cosmopolitan. Too many exhibits present First Nations work in isolation from the globalized world, creating a false image of separation and expressing a historicity that does not exist. Displays of First Nations art in art museums will certainly contribute to ongoing efforts to enhance viewers' understanding and appreciation of these works, and will also acknowledge the forces of globalism.

Technologies such as the Internet, the proliferation of mass media, and the easy access to long-distance travel are all aspects of globalization. Since the 1970s, the world has seen intensified technological change, commodification and homogenization of cultural values, globalization of economic forces, displacement and exile of populations, changing of borders, empowerment of Aboriginal people in landclaims, and forced or deliberate diasporas. All this has contributed to situations where people are deprived of their sense of place and wrenched away from their connection with their homelands. An important trend in art history, anthropology, and cultural studies has led to a focus on the consequences of globalization and deterritorialization, with increased emphasis given to enhancement of communities, identification and importance of place, expression of identity, preservation of the environment, and celebration of local cultures (Harvey 1993, 5–7). Several recent publications analyze the nature of the regional, the community-oriented, and the indigenous – as they exist in, relate to, and interact with the larger world.[4] Place – like time and space – is a social construction. Understanding the sense of place embraces a variety of human experiences and expressions: remembering, imagining, yearning for, living in, describing, struggling over, and tying place to one's identity. Lucy Lippard (1997, 9) puts it succinctly: "space defines landscape, where space combined with memory defines place." If any group resonates with its land, it is the first people who inhabited that land. But they are not the only people who claim a connection with the land. Others arrived and interacted (often destructively) with the first inhabitants – some of whom remained and some of whom left. Over the generations, complex interactions of different cultures on the land have enhanced the unique and changing sense of place within the larger sphere of globalization.

Museums, with their new commitment to multivocality and their new openness to other cultures, are uniquely capable of expressing cultural connections to place. The approach suggested by Arjun Appadurai (1996, 11) for anthropology – an investigation of the nature of locality as lived, experienced, and represented in the globalized and deterritorialized world – can be equally applied to art museums. The art history of a region can be presented in four periods: First Nations art until contact; art created during the period of early contact; art created after the region assumes a clear identity; "post-regional" art that acknowledges the increasingly intense interactions between the local and the global. This approach brings together three groups: those who feel ownership of a terrain because their ancestors lived upon it for all of history; those who conquered these first peoples; and those who came to the place more recently by circumstance. Today place includes many players: some from the region, some from far off, some recent immigrants, some ancient residents. The representations, interpretations, and artistic depictions of place embrace diversity and speak to many.

With exhibitions that connect place to the people who lived in it, the people who live in it now, and also to the larger world, we may be able to address some of the concerns about contemporary life so eloquently expressed by Martin Heidegger (1966, 47–8, quoted in Harvey 1993, 11): "The rootlessness, the autochthony, of man is threatened today at its core. If we lose the capacity to dwell, then we lose our roots and find ourselves cut off from all sources of spiritual nourishment. The impoverishment of existence is incalculable." If they act with sensitivity and optimism, art museums can present and interpret First Nations art, from the earliest preserved creations to contemporary expressions, alongside art made by others who visited their land, and still others who came to that land and made it their home. Art museums may be able to reinforce the capacity to dwell, to seek nourishment in one's surroundings, and to help overcome that impoverishment so pervasive in the world we know today.

First Nations art – a Kwakwaka'wakw mask, a Mi'kmaq basket, an Old Bering Sea ivory carving, a Crow beaded dress, a Robert Davidson print, a Jaune Quick-to-See Smith painting – can mean many things to many people. Of course these treasures have significance to those First Nations people who made and use them. But, presented in an art museum alongside other art, they also communicate several important points.

- First Nations art is equal in artistic merit to art from other cultures, especially the dominant culture.
- Art can be made by and appreciated by many different kinds of people, not just those from the privileged classes.
- First Nations people and their cultures exist not in a vacuum but rather within a regional and a global context.
- Art can express the unique features of a particular place, and at the same time acknowledge the globalism of contemporary life.

Removed from a gallery that is restricted to the creations of indigenous people, and placed alongside other types of art, First Nations art will share these important concepts with those viewers who gaze at art and, we hope, leave the museum with an enhanced appreciation and understanding of the history and future of human culture.

Notes

1. The literature analyzing museums is extensive; see, for example, Bal 1996; Bennett 1995; Clifford 1988, 1997; Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1995; Karp and Lavine 1991; Lumley 1988; Sherman and Rogoff 1994. Ethnographic museums in particular have been subjected to serious study: Ames 1992, Coombes 1994, Harvey 1996, Kaplan 1994, Root 1996, Stocking 1985, Vergo 1989, Walsh 1992. For art museums in particular, see Association of Art Museum Directors 1993, Crimp 1993, Duncan 1995, MacDonald and Fyfe 1996, Pointon 1994, Wallach 1998, Weil 1995.

2. In contrast, in the early twentieth century, natural history museums encouraged these very masses – especially recent immigrants – to visit, and presented exhibits intended to socialize them. In more recent years, science, history, and natural history museums have responded in varying measures to criticisms of their operations. Many of these institutions take visitor behavior into account when developing exhibits; they share authority with minorities and Native people in representations of their cultures, and endeavor to improve the educational potential of their institutions, often partnering with schools. See DiMaggio 1991, Jonaitis 1992.

3. See Susan Vogel's introduction to *Art/Artifact* (Danto 1988) for an important analysis of the way different museums exhibit Native art and the influence of those display styles on public understanding of the objects.

4. See Feld and Basso 1996 (a publication that resulted from one of the prestigious seminars of the School for American Research conducted in 1993), James Clifford 1997, and Lucy Lippard 1997. See also Allen and Schlereth 1990, Crumsey 1994, Duncan and Ley 1993, and Jackson 1994, 1997. Both Victor Burgin 1996 and Hal Foster 1996 assert that identity politics, which can be based on nationality, race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, or religion, has replaced class politics, and that if we are to understand culture, we should look towards identity politics.

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Framing Aboriginal Art at the Museum of Sydney

Wendy Brady

> *Thick bands of metal frame the images, they hang suspended in space and the light is subdued. Observers mill around and speak in hushed tones about the depth of the imagery, the vibrancy of the colours and try to unravel the stories that lie within. A small child asks, "Can our school have doors like that?" An adult replies, "Oh, they aren't really doors. They are art".*
>
> Brady (1999, 1)

This experience highlighted for me the diversity of understandings of Indigenous representations and of their display in museums. These doors were originally intended to teach Aboriginal children about their traditional lore. When the doors were brought to the attention of the non-Indigenous art industry, the Aboriginal people who painted them found their works were no longer teaching tools but were pronounced to be works of art. The re-framing of these images changed both the lives of the individual artists and notions of Aboriginal art in Australia. Such a fundamental shift in the worth of these representations by a society with different world values brought unexpected benefits to the artists' community, but these benefits came at a price: their traditional lore was subjected to intense scrutiny. With this particular Aboriginal community, as with others, the price was often paid both through the effects of a changed communal economy and through the relinquishment of property rights in the ownership of the traditional knowledge that was integral to the works. When a work falls into the Western European category of "art," restrictions over access to images, the meanings of those images, and the right to reproduce them – which are held through language group, clan, and totemic relationships – may be foregone or challenged. This is not to deny that Indigenous artists produce works for the general art market in full knowledge of the required restrictions and expectations. However, there are artists who, through different systems of values and codes of conduct, have expectations that their work will be displayed within cultural conventions. The ownership and display of particular Indigenous images requires not only an acknowledgement of difference but also practices that constitute an active process of observation as well as an adherence to cultural protocols.

In order to ensure the observation of appropriate codes of conduct and the formation of a bridge across cultural differences, the majority of museums in Australia have engaged in the formulation and implementation of policies and practices to achieve institutional change. These include

- the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff;
- recruitment and training of Indigenous people;
- formulation and implementation of policies specifically concerned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conservation and display;
- training of non-Indigenous staff in cross-cultural communication;
- public education programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture;
- recognition of cultural and intellectual property rights;
- establishment of *keeping places*;
- funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander galleries, museums and interpretative centres that are controlled and staffed by Indigenous people;
- specific galleries dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works within general art galleries and museums;
- exhibitions based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes.

To clarify the range of methods and approaches used by museums I shall use the example of a touring exhibition of the doors described at the introduction to this paper. "Unhinged: The Yuendumu Doors," an exhibition presented by the Museum of Sydney in 1999, typifies the complexities of both representation and display. These doors came from the primary school buildings in Yuendumu, a remote Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory, approximately 200 kilometres northwest of Alice Springs in Central Australia. The Walpiri people (who speak the language of the same name) constitute the main population of a community that was formed at its present location through the demands and influence of government and missionaries during the middle decades of the twentieth century.

In 1984, these doors were painted in the traditional dot-painting style as part of an Education Department project to bring more Aboriginal knowledge to children, particularly as there was a growth in graffiti. Senior men of the community, some of whom were employed as manual workers at the school, painted thirty to forty doors; they were paid five Australian dollars per door. In his analysis of Aboriginal art, *Bad Aboriginal Art*, Eric Michaels declares that the Yuendumu and Papunya acrylics, including the doors, should be "judged first and foremost in terms of the social practices that produce and circulate them – practices that promote issues of authority, not authenticity. From this analysis, their history can be appreciated as expressing precisely the extreme contradictions of colonialism and racism in which they are generated and sold" (Michaels 1994, 161).

Eric Michaels describes how the classification of Aboriginal art and its valuation in monetary terms expressed racism, entrepreneurism, and colonialism. It could also be argued that the "Yuendumu Doors" represent both an Indigenous attempt to intervene in Western forms of teaching and the alienation expressed by youth through graffiti. The doors also signify an active use of both pre-colonized and colonized techniques to change behaviour within the community. As one senior man stated,

> ***We painted these Dreamings on the school doors because the children should learn about our Law. The children do not know them and they might become like white people, we don't want to happen. We are relating these true stories of the Dreamtime. We show them to the children and explain them so that the children will know them. We want our children to learn about and know our Law, our Dreamings. That is why we painted these Dreamtime stories.***
>
> **Cited in Warlukurlangu Artists (1987, 3)**

The Yuendumu doors are very much a living expression of beliefs and Indigenous worldviews. They were intended not as static works of art but as learning tools and statements of belief. Through these doors children and adults moved between introduced Western culture and contemporary Aboriginal life. As the students opened them, their hands would touch the work of the senior people and the images would remind them of their identity as Indigenous people. But now the doors have been given another meaning – that of "art object." They have been taken out of context; they have been moved away from those who sought to remind the community of its links to millenniums of knowledge and its ongoing responsibility for the maintenance of culture.

The images on the doors were meant to draw connections for those who saw them between the physical and the spiritual and vice versa. In effect, the "Yuendumu Doors" became a catalyst for the transfer of ancient images from ground and paper to canvas. The Walpiri people used to transfer knowledge from adults to children by teaching "them a long time ago in the bush by drawing on their bodies, on the ground, and on rocks. This was the way men and women used to teach their children" (cited in Warlukurlangu Artists 1987, 9). Once the images were committed to the doors and these doors then received recognition in the art market, the community was opened to an overwhelming change. As one commentator wrote, the doors "lead to the creation of some of the most significant early examples of Aboriginal art" (Genocchio 1999, 23).

The significance of the "Yuendumu Doors" lies not only in the images, or the purpose for which those images were painted, but also in what unfolded for the Walpiri people and the Yuendumu community with the recognition of the doors as a new wave in Aboriginal art. The Yuendumu no longer have these doors: after twelve years of exposure to the elements while serving as a symbolic entrance to millenniums of spiritual knowledge, the doors were acquired by the South Australian Museum. Following the acquisition, the Museum applied for and received a government grant of $36,700 to develop what was described as "an innovative and exciting exhibition, which will feature the 'Yuendumu Doors,' supported by a touch screen interactive, allowing visitors to interrogate the art and relate it to the landscape and Dreaming story to which it refers, plus video, animation and photography. The funding will also help build the crates and the furniture needed to transport the 100kg doors." In 1999 the Museum chose what it believed were the "twelve best" doors (out of a total of thirty) for a travelling exhibition.

At the Museum of Sydney the travelling doors were placed in a darkened room, along with supporting technology to provide a context for the works. One art critic described looking upon the doors as "meditative," while asserting they are "icons of Aboriginal art" (Genocchio 1999, 23).

The Aboriginal senior people who painted the school doors for their children are now regarded as artists by Australian and international museums. This recognition has dramatically changed their lives and their experiences of non-Aboriginal society. The artists are not uncritical of this response to their paintings. Tara Leckey, manager of the Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Association of Yuendumu, voices the artists concerns about the doors.

> *[The doors] were never intended as artworks. They were educational tools, caught up in all this art critic stuff. They [the artists] don't give two hoots about whether they are seen as painterly or masterful. They were putting it all down to show the journeys of the ancestors. That's why we were disappointed people saw them as an art form. They were never designed to be hung.*
>
> **Jopson (1999, 6)**

The Warlukurlangu artists painted the Yuendumu doors for their children so that they might learn about their Dreaming stories. They were successful and those children now teach the next generation. The stories will continue. The struggle now is to exercise rights over the images and stories they contain. In response to a reporter's question as to whether people in cities should try to stop graffiti using the same method as the Yuendumu community Paddy Japaljarri said, "They can put their own Dreaming. What they know. Not copy 'em. Their own Dreaming" (Jopson 1999, 6).

The "Yuendumu Doors" embody the contest between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous ways of knowing and seeing. The artists' intention in producing the images was educational, but because of the mode of the images and the materials used, the doors became accessible to others, not for their meaning, but for their style of representation. Now they hang in museums and art galleries – according to people from Yuendumu – to teach others about Aboriginal culture and history. But are they appreciated as such? David Kerr, senior exhibition manager of the South Australian Museum, is reported as saying that the colours applied in the works became indicative of what is expected in Aboriginal art today. "The art world was hungry for such integrity," declared Kerr in an interview (Jopson 1999, 6). The issue remains the intersection between a non-Indigenous "hunger" for integrity and Indigenous cultural and intellectual rights, and it concerns the consumption of Indigenous imagery as a manifestation of ongoing colonization. The debate in Australian Aboriginal art today is about cultural and intellectual rights as well as authenticity and Indigenous identity.

Display and exhibition of Indigenous materials and images within museums are fundamentally problematic. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists have endeavoured to infiltrate and gain recognition in dominant cultural arenas, while others have attempted to bridge both worlds, exhibiting and working cross-culturally. There has been a successful attempt on the part of Indigenous artists and communities, as well as institutions, to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spaces as either separate or distinct galleries. However, the majority of settings are not Aboriginal defined or controlled spaces. In such spaces, most works are decontextualized not only through placement, but also architecturally, philosophically, culturally, and by way of ownership of the knowledge contained within the work or the materials. There has been an expansion both in the rate of construction of museums and in the complexity of their financial structures. For example, the Guggenheim in Bilbao cost an estimated $US100 million with a supposed $US20 million to "rent" the name (Bonyhady 2000, 4). As centres for cultural investment, museums are affected by the need for corporate and government funds. In addition, because they require high levels of public attendance, they must program displays that are of interest to their population of supporters. In Australia, Aboriginal art can be attractive to museums because it projects a multi-cultural image to visitors and the general community.

Some Indigenous artists and artisans aspire to be recognized in contexts other than Aboriginal ones. Others continue to produce their work within very specific cultural frameworks and do not seek entry into dominant culture markets or institutions. However, most Aboriginal artists need to gain entry into dominant or globalized markets in order to survive financially and continue to produce their artworks. In order to open the doors to those markets, Aboriginal artists need to balance adherence to their systems of belief and worldviews against the inquisitive and acquisitive nature of the contemporary international art world.

There have been attempts to re-form the relationship between Indigenous Australian artists and major museums in Australia. The appointment of Aboriginal advisors and staff (including curators, education officers, guides, and performance and visual artists in residence) illustrates a desire on the part of major institutions to bring about cultural change in the organization. The involvement of Indigenous people in the administration, management, curatorial, and education sections of museums provides opportunities to access Indigenous perspectives and interventions in the development and implementation of museum policies and practices.

For example, the Art Gallery of New South Wales consistently provides a variety of Indigenous programs for its audiences. In the 1999/2000 program, events ranged from the production of a sand-painting by artists from Yuendumu to a children's program presented by Walpiri Media, and films featuring Indigenous communities from Northern Australia and the internationally recognized artist and filmmaker

Tracey Moffat. An exhibition titled "Bulada: The Snake" featured representations of snakes from some of the cultural regions of Aboriginal Australia that are included in the Yiribana collection. Performances at the Art Gallery included performer-in-residence dancer and didgeridoo player Sean Choolburra and Indigenous storyteller Pauline McLeod. Cross-cultural initiatives included an Aboriginal-Indian presentation to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of India's independence and the process of reconciliation held in August 2000. The Gallery also had an education program for visitors and a school holiday program for children. Such a comprehensive approach would not be a success without the employment of Aboriginal staff, dedicated programs of education and performance, exhibitions in Yiribana (the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gallery), and the inclusion of works by Indigenous artists in general exhibitions.

Art museums elsewhere in Australia have similar but perhaps fewer programs that acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and artistry. Classification of Aboriginal imagery also varies. The categorization and classification of Indigenous art works and materials is, by its nature, contradictory. In the world of display it is in the main defined outside Indigenous frames of reference. In the Northern Territory Art Gallery, some Aboriginal artworks are exhibited in "Human Sciences," along with mining history, anthropology, and agricultural history, while Aboriginal contemporary works are classified as "Fine Arts."

Dialogue is essential for effective and appropriate display of Indigenous works. The means to achieve informed and equal dialogue can be difficult as parties attempt to communicate across cultures. Dialogue can be problematic or non-existent not only within institutions, but also intra-culturally, between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people. According to Darlene Johnson, it is generally impossible "to challenge other Aboriginal people and/or criticize the representational practices of Aboriginal communities," owing to the complex relationships between individuals and communities (Johnson 1993, 35). Criticism may be levelled, but it is usually done within Indigenous networks so as to avoid the ever-present tendency by non-Indigenous observers to label such exchanges as "conflict" or "bad behaviour." Non-Indigenous people can also interpret such criticism, especially when it is expressed in the process of developing policies, programs or exhibitions, as an inability or lack of commitment to engage with the institution. There are also expectations that different shades of black indicate differing abilities to engage in the process.

Many contemporary Aboriginal artists in Australia struggle against the category of "urban" Aboriginal art. Generally this is meant to convey Indigenous artists who are not working within the loosely defined notion of "traditional" representation. This category is an illusion, but it consistently undermines the attempts by some Aboriginal artists to receive recognition of their work. Alternatively, certain Indigenous artists are "chosen" to engage with the art community because of their particular style or appeal – a choice that can be deeply disturbing to the artists, who may well question whether it is their work or their identity that is being displayed. On the other hand, assumptions are constantly made about artists who work within and from their communities. Some of these artists have become icons of what is considered "good" Aboriginal art.

There is, it seems, a desperate search for the authentic Aboriginal artist who creates either "traditional" representations or what has been crudely termed "hybrid" Indigenous art works. A recent book by Nicholas Thomas analyzed the work of Gordon Bennett, who is described as "disrupting colonial representations ... by recasting them ... and by insisting on the presence of racism and violence within them" (Thomas 1999, 199). Thomas's description of Bennett's art conveys a reading of the work that Bennett no doubt desired in that he is portrayed as re-appropriating representations and exploding them to reveal the violence and racism of colonizing cultures. Thomas notes that one dealer declared in 1995 that she would no longer purchase work from artists in remote communities but would deal only with "urban" Aboriginal artists. The assumption was, according to Thomas, "that the locus of creativity had shifted from the deserts to the cities" (Thomas 1999, 219). Once again Aboriginal identity and its relationship to the production of images by Aboriginal artists is brought into question by non-Indigenous definitions of Aboriginality.

The notion of authenticity has become a major issue in Australia to the extent that the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association developed a Label of Authenticity that "covers seventeen classes of goods and service encompassing all art forms including visual arts, literature, theatre, dance, and performance art, as well as education and tourism services." Indigenous artists apply to display the label once they declare they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The purpose of the label is to "eliminate the sale of fake products and identify the artist's product as authentic." It also requires that the artists declare their "authorship and ownership over the art or cultural product" (*The Authentic Guide* 2000, 11).

Authenticity has been an ongoing concern in the art world. Prior to Western intervention Indigenous artists were only allowed to produce images and other cultural material under their clan or totemic rules. With the emergence of an Aboriginal art industry this has changed and, in some instances, this change has affected the practice of communal production of images, which was commonplace in some areas. There have been cases of sacred images or images by a particular artist being used without permission on products such as imported carpets, T-shirts, and greeting cards; of non-Indigenous people producing works using Aboriginal names and designs; and of museums or private purchasers finding that works purchased in the belief they were painted by a significant Aboriginal artist were fakes.

Art museums throughout the world need to engage in constructive and productive dialogue with Indigenous people to ensure that the acquisition, display, and ownership of Aboriginal art works truly meet the needs and aspirations of the artists and their communities. Questions concerning appropriate methods and settings for the display of Indigenous art and other cultural materials can only be resolved when Indigenous people are able to exercise their authority in museums.

The "Yuendumu Doors" brought international recognition to the Indigenous Australian artists who painted them. The "Doors" are now on display, hung in the frames that held them in place on the school buildings at Yuendumu. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people pass in front of them and wonder at their beauty. They were intended to teach young Aboriginal people about their culture and identity. Will the stories they hold teach non-Indigenous adults and children about the need for their cultural maintenance, or will they only be seen as objects for display?

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After Essay – Questioning History, Questioning Art

Richard Fung

I immigrated to Canada from Trinidad with my family in the early seventies. To qualify on the point system, my parents had to show they could support their dependent children and that they could speak one of the two official languages, English or French. When I disembarked at the airport in Toronto, I received a pink form – a Canadian Immigration Identification Record – that detailed my immigration status. Stapled to my passport, this slip entitled me to re-enter Canada legally and to visit the United States without a visa, something I could not do with my Trinidad and Tobago citizenship documents. My volunteer work as a translator for Latin American immigrants and refugees in the mid-1980s instilled a paranoia (or perhaps a sober realization) that my political activism might one day jeopardize my immigration status. This, coupled with a growing recognition that I had set real roots in Toronto, drove me to apply for Canadian citizenship. I remember a shaky moment in the qualifying interview when the citizenship judge asked who the head of state was. I answered confidently, "the Queen of England." I was, after all, born and raised in a British colony. But she looked sternly at me and solemnly pronounced, "No, the Queen of Canada." I now carry a Canadian passport.

At the start of the Vancouver session of "A Working Discussion on Aboriginal Representation in the Art Gallery," the delegates were welcomed to Musqueam territory by Debra Sparrow. I had undergone no official process to come in to her territory – no interviews, no language tests, no pink forms, no border guards, no customs. I could enter and leave Vancouver without even being aware of whose land I was visiting. During the discussions that followed, other Aboriginal speakers outlined a political geography not illustrated in any widely available contemporary world atlas. It is precisely this parallel cartography that dramatizes a defining fact of Canada, its colonial character. The fact that Canada – like all the states of the so-called Americas – is an actively colonizing nation built on and thriving at the expense of other living nations is seldom acknowledged or appreciated in its full magnitude. The implications of this geopolitics puts Canadian nationalist fears about American encroachment in another perspective and renders surreal the smug sanctimoniousness with which official Canadian discourse pronounces on the Balkans or other situations of territorial dispute.

Colonization in Canada no longer demands a literal war. Paraphrasing Michel Foucault, the tanks at Kahnesatà:ke represent only the failure of state power (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983). Canadian legitimacy is accomplished hegemonically through a social consensus that saturates our institutions of governance, law, information, education – and our institutions of culture and art. The large institutional gallery is historically one of the places where we learn narratives about civilization and cultural superiority. In this sense, the gallery can rationalize the colonial project as a civilizing mission. This is what is at stake in any discussion of the relationship of Aboriginal historical art to the historical time lines of Canadian art in the public gallery. The placement of objects – their contextualization, juxtaposition, and institutional housing, whether in an ethnographic museum or an art gallery – both reflects and constructs competing claims of legitimacy.

At the conceptual core of the issue is the double-sided truth that, as Gerald McMaster pointed out, Canadian history and Aboriginal histories have been intertwined for many years, and, as Lee Ann Martin appended, this relationship is defined by unequal power. Such a situation produces a series of dilemmas. Ignoring Aboriginal work in the historical time line of Canadian art misrepresents the history of artistic production in this land, but including Aboriginal works within an already established and legitimated Euro-Canadian framework can reinscribe the processes of colonization and subjugation. As Audra Simpson asked, "What does it mean to name us (Mohawks) as Canadians?"

Yet it is Canadian, not Aboriginal, institutions that are generally in a position to frame these works for the public, because they have the resources, the status, and in most cases the collections, as well. This forum is not set up to discuss the question, "How can we include Euro-Canadian objects in Aboriginal aesthetics or art history?" Tom Hill described the inclusion of works on Native spirituality by non-First Nations artists in exhibitions at the Woodland Cultural Centre, but he also used the metaphor of being invited to play on a rink where some players have skates and others do not, to illustrate the difference between his institution and the large urban public museums and galleries. Taking this question even further, Jolene Rickard asked whether either the museum or the gallery constituted "neutral legal space" when "Native history is not acknowledged within governmentally-empowered space within our homelands."

The historic split between institutions of art and those of ethnography relates to divergent meanings of the word "culture." In the past, this division was reflected in what I have referred to as an apartheid in cultural funding. The Canada Council for the Arts and other arts councils based their decisions on Eurocentric narratives of high art that start with the Greeks and develop dynamically toward modernism and beyond to postmodernism. The "other" cultures were seen as frozen in time and delegated to the purview of the various departments of multiculturalism or Indian Affairs. Though formally banished, traces of these assumptions still linger within the institutional divide. Regarding institutions of exhibition and display, Ruth Phillips noted that an art gallery carries more "symbolic capital" than an ethnographic museum. Thus to recognize historical Aboriginal pieces as art serves to legitimize their worth. Many historical pieces in collections were made specifically for non-Native trade, but in what ways does the foregrounding of aesthetic qualities detract from the significance, spiritual or otherwise, of other works? As writers such as Gayatri Spivak and Clyde Taylor remind us, art is not an innocent category. The development of the philosophical ideas of aesthetics and art which inform the practices of art galleries are intricately intertwined with histories of colonialism, racism, and Eurocentrism (Spivak 1999, Taylor 1998). Morgan Wood raised the issue of repatriating spiritual items. Can Aboriginal historical pieces find an appropriate home in an institutional site that does not recognize all aspects of their value? This is a challenging question. "Objects speak, but objects are also silenced," noted Dot Tuer.

While it is necessary to develop well-funded Aboriginal-specific spaces, the large public art galleries are important for their symbolic and pedagogical functions – and these institutions are neither static nor unchangeable. What they show, how they show it, and to whom they show it – not divorced, of course, from whom they address as their audience – has evolved over time. Under current financial pressures, for example, we are seeing a return to more popular, and populist, directions as they attempt to increase audiences. Understanding that shifts have taken place allows us to imagine the institution differently. But before art and audiences, or rather, in tandem with art and audiences, there must be a shift in who makes the decisions and who defines the terms of inclusion. Jamelie Hassan raised the crucial (and for most institutions presumably embarrassing) question of how many galleries have Aboriginal members on their boards of directors and, for those that do, whether these members sit on committees that exercise power to affect the acquisition and exhibition of artworks? Richard W. Hill raised the question of institutional change at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Will the gallery hire First Nation curators and institute comprehensive equity programmes for Aboriginal people? Chief Curator Dennis Reid responded that the AGO was "willing to be pursued." Hill sought assurances that if Aboriginal people engaged in a process of negotiation or collaboration with the institution their recommendations would be enacted.

I started my introduction to the Toronto session by lauding the courage of participants in undertaking this conversation. I was thinking back to my tenure on the first Canada Council Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts (an initiative of then-director Joyce Zemans, convened by Chris Creighton-Kelly). The Committee brought together a cross-disciplinary selection of First Nations, people of colour, and white artists, as well as academics from different regions of Canada to study how the Council functioned to support or pass over the work of non-white artists. We made recommendations to reaffirm the existing strengths of the Council, to begin the process of systemic change, and to guide the implementation of those recommendations. One of the members, Margo Kane, also sat on the Aboriginal Committee which met simultaneously with a complementary mandate.

Although there is still work to be done at the Canada Council, I remain pleased with our efforts. Yet I suspect I was not the only participant for whom the experience involved stress and anxiety. Many of us from outside of the Council were worried about maintaining our integrity and our reputations among those we regarded as our home communities. We did not want to be co-opted by the institution. On the other hand, we could detect fear on the part of some Council employees (at that time the Council had an all-white staff except for Creighton-Kelly who was hired on contract) that work might be disrupted, that art might be overpoliticized, or that the process might engender a political backlash (Fung 1993).

In the end, the Committee made a thorough analysis of not only how and why First Nations artists and artists from minoritized racial and ethnic communities were handicapped at Council, but also the ways in which they were enabled. We devised recommendations to eradicate and redress the effects of systemic racism in twelve areas, including communications, human resources, juries and advisory committees, board appointments, designated funding, and definitions of professionalism. Although it is important to open up jobs, equity does not begin or stop at a hiring process, nor are internships a substitute for real jobs. The Committee structure was continued to support the work of the equity officer employed to implement the changes. Finally, we set a time line to achieve these goals.

The racial logic that drives settler states such as Canada overlaps with racial ideologies connected to other instances of colonialism. These in turn manifest themselves in Canada against the presence of diasporic communities of colour. Wendy Brady has described the unwillingness of dominant institutions in Australia to absorb and respect Aboriginal protocols. Culture and colour are issues for Aboriginal peoples. Yet Aboriginal sovereignty differs importantly from racial equity in its relationship to the land. It contests the master narratives of the nation.

The answer to this central question posed for the session on history and art is neither simple nor straightforward. There can be no single answer. What is required is a strategic decision based on an assessment of political and practical gains and liabilities for each instance in which the issue arises. I suggest that the location of who is answering the question also guides, if not determines, the response. On this question, for example, the tone and direction of the discussion in Toronto was quite different from that in Vancouver. The Toronto discussion focused on the broader political and conceptual questions at stake, while the Vancouver discussion focused on more pragmatic concerns of implementation and experience. This no doubt derived from the selection of individual participants, the order in which the consultations took place, the artistic and demographic economies within the two cities, and the differing histories of community relationships forged by the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of Ontario. But it also reflects the diversity in culture and in the political strategies adopted by Aboriginal artists and nations in the centre-east and on the west coast in response to varying contexts.

The working discussion was an important forum for sharing ideas and opening up questions regarding the relationship of historical Aboriginal works to the space of the Canadian historical gallery. Yet there is an impatience with too much talk. Both the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Vancouver Art Gallery must be congratulated on their willingness to participate in these exploratory conversations, but if the good will is to last, those with power in the galleries must demonstrate their commitment to further decolonize their institutions through an ongoing formal process of power-sharing, collaboration and change.

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Tourist Art and "Craft" in the Gallery?

A Proper Place for Art or the Proper Arts of Place?

Native North American Objects and the Hierarchies of Art, Craft, and Souvenir

Ruth B. Phillips

One of the diagnostic features of Western modernity is the rise of the public museum. Over the course of the past century and a half, museums have replaced churches and palaces in modern secular societies as the proper places for art. Not coincidentally, the "museum age" – the high period of museum building that lasted from the mid-nineteenth through the first quarter of the twentieth century – coincided with the consolidation of Western imperial dominion over indigenous peoples around the world (Sturtevant 1969, Hinsley 1981, Sheets-Pyenson 1988). In both Europe and the colonies, the creation of public museums and the installation of exhibits that inscribed Eurocentric metanarratives of the historical development of art and culture were instrumental in disciplining publics to particular regimes of power and constructs of nation and citizenship (Bennett 1995, Duncan 1991, Hooper-Greenhill 1992). Museums supported the establishment of settler societies in the nineteenth century, and their self-definition as independent nation states during the twentieth. An effect of their activities was the overlaying of existing indigenous systems of spirituality, expressive culture, and value with idealist notions of art and scientific paradigms of objecthood. Both Western constructs conveyed particular hierarchies of race, class, and gender, and both mystified the historical contexts of use and the processes of commoditization that are associated with many of the objects that became redefined as "art." Authenticity was defined in relation to non-Western objects as an essentialist marker of value posited on a dialectic of purity and contamination that was closely tied to Victorian theories of race and fears of miscegenation and hybridity (Young 1995, Phillips and Steiner 1999b, Coombes 1994).

The specific problem to be addressed in this paper – the positioning of native-made objects that have been categorized as "craft" and/or "tourist" arts in future, more inclusive, museological narratives of Canadian art history – must be situated within the ideological matrix I have just briefly outlined. In considering this problem I will make two assumptions: first, that museums in some form are here to stay and will continue to be regarded as the proper places for art; second, that a commitment to inclusivity brings with it an obligation to open the museum not just to Aboriginal objects but to their makers' understandings of how those objects function and are valued. In other words, we need to ask not only how indigenous peoples have historically defined authenticity and value, but also how they define these criteria today, in the aftermath of several centuries of contact and accommodation to Western culture. In this essay I will look at the problems of authenticity, craft, and the souvenir from four different angles. I will begin by examining in more detail the myth of purity and contamination that is invoked by the modernist paradigm of authenticity, at how this myth has been used to construct canons of Native North American art, and at Aboriginal interventions into both the canon and the paradigm. Secondly, I will look at the limitations imposed on Western constructs of "art" by the surviving object record itself, and also at its historical contingency in relation to changing Western and Aboriginal modes of production, collecting, and valuation. Thirdly, I will consider the problem of gender, its relationship to the hierarchy of fine and applied arts, the common cause made by Aboriginal and feminist critiques of this hierarchy, and the implications of these critiques for standard art museum practices. Finally, I will return to the art gallery itself, and attempt to problematize its nature as a space that privileges the visual contemplation of objects over other senses, over story, and over ritual and ceremonial performance.

Authenticity: The Myth of Purity and Contamination

In her recent book, *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress* (1998), anthropologist Shelly Errington traces the rise of the modernist paradigm of Authentic Primitive Art in the United States through a series of temporary exhibits, ranging from the 1914 exhibition at Alfred Stieglitz's 219 Gallery in New York, to the exhibits of African, Oceanic, and American Indian art at the Museum of Modern Art during the 1930s and 1940s, to the permanent Museum of Primitive Art established in New York in 1957. The "authenticity" of the objects celebrated in these classic venues of Authentic Primitive Art was tied to the requirement that objects defined as Primitive Art be made for and used within the producers' own communities. The term "Primitive" referenced the belief that the producing cultures belonged to technologically simpler and culturally less advanced phases of human development similar to those that had preceded the rise of Western civilization. The category of "Art" privileged those objects that were farthest removed from the tool-like or the utilitarian, following the Kantian premise that functionality constrains the artist's freedom to reach the highest and purest forms of intellectual and aesthetic expression.

In Errington's argument, just as Authentic Primitive Art achieved its ultimate institutional validation with the 1982 opening of the Rockefeller Wing of Primitive Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the linked concepts of authenticity and the primitive on which it was founded began to lose their credibility. On the one hand, post-structuralist and post-colonial academic theorists deconstructed the vestiges of cultural evolutionist theory from which notions of the primitive were derived;[1] on the other hand, further production of Authentic objects became logically impossible, both with the global extension of art markets, commoditization, and Western concepts of art, and with the recognition of the ubiquitousness of contact zones, commoditization, hybridity, and reflexivity (Marcus and Myers 1995, Phillips and Steiner 1999a). The third term of the construct "Authentic Primitive Art" – "art" itself – also came under attack from many quarters during the late twentieth century. Errington's view represents that of most anthropologists: "I take art to be not a class of objects with fixed characteristics," she writes, "but a set of historically specific ideas and practices that have shifted meanings in the course of the centuries. Objects that show a spark of transcendence, as well as ones that patently do not, can become art, certainly, by being separated from their original uses, framed, and exhibited" (Errington 1998, 103). "Art" has also come under attack within the academy from social historians of art who would replace it with the broader category of "visual culture" (Ginzburg et al. 1995, Mitchell 1995, Elkins 1999, Mirzoeff 1999). However, fine art – understood as a category of non-utilitarian and decontextualized objects possessed of inherent aesthetic qualities that reward contemplation – remains largely undisturbed and continues to be privileged within art museums.

Errington asserts that during the late 1980s post-structuralist and post-colonialist critiques of the authentic and the primitive finally rendered the construct of Authentic Primitive Art obsolete, a situation hastened by the debates generated by the controversial 1984 show "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.[2] During the same years an even more far-reaching set of debates erupted in Canada, following the call for a boycott of the 1988 exhibition "The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples" organized by the Glenbow Museum.[3] Although the immediate provocation was the sponsorship of the exhibition by an oil company implicated in the unresolved land claim of the Lubicon Cree, the debate rapidly expanded to include critiques of many long-established museological practices.[4] Two of these critiques directly engaged Western appropriations of Native objects as art and notions of the authentic. The exhibition's focus on the early contact period was read as a privileging of the past over the present and provoked demands for museums to address contemporary Aboriginal issues and cultural expressions – and, by clear implication, to validate the authenticity of contemporary arts. The exhibition also provoked the most radical interventions to that date in the canon of Aboriginal art that had evolved during the twentieth century and into which had been appropriated objects considered sacred and unsuitable for museum display by the originating communities.[5]

Important and necessary though these debates were, they also overshadowed the many revelations about specific contact histories offered by the exhibition itself. "The Spirit Sings" was an extraordinary, unprecedented, and probably unrepeatable event that reassembled well over 600 objects collected during the early contact period from over ninety museums around the world.[6] One of the most striking historical patterns it revealed was how early and how universally Aboriginal people responded to contact by initiating commoditized production of artistically embellished objects, first for the curio trade and later for the tourist market. The visitor path of "The Spirit Sings" was designed as a journey across Canada from east to west, a path that, roughly speaking, repeated the chronological progression of the wave of European contact and settlement across the continent from the late sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. This structure demonstrated (somewhat counter-intuitively) that the regions contacted earliest by Europeans were those most lacking in "Authentic Primitive Art." Entering the exhibit in the Maritimes the visitor was confronted with objects made by the Beothuk people of Newfoundland, who were driven to extinction in the early nineteenth century. Of the 109 items from Maritime Canada in the exhibition, the eighteen Beothuk entries – bark containers, bone pendants retrieved from graves, and a legging that had been patched together from remnants of hide, spruce root, and ochre and used as a baby's burial shroud – were the only objects that were not made from trade materials, not stylistically and generically hybrid, or not made for sale to Europeans. In other words, virtually all the Mi'kmaq and Malecite pieces fell, by Western definitions, into the categories of "decorative art," "craft" or "souvenir art" – a set of classificatory distinctions that do not exist within Aboriginal conceptualizations of expressive and material culture, and that do not reflect emic understandings of value or authenticity. The plenitude of quilled boxes and canoe models in the opening section of "The Spirit Sings" constituted, I would argue, a silent challenge to definitions of the authentic that were still operative in ethnographic and art museums.[7]

Two claims made at a press conference held on the morning of the official opening of "The Spirit Sings" by Aboriginal supporters of the Lubicon boycott are representative of the types of activist interventions into existing canons of Aboriginal art and paradigms of authenticity that were stimulated by the controversy surrounding the exhibition. Michael Jill, of the Conne Indian band in Newfoundland, announced that the Mi'kmaq Indians of Eastern Canada would take action to reclaim a Mi'kmaq canoe in the exhibition (fig. 5). This canoe, the only extant, full-sized Mi'kmaq canoe in existence, had been commissioned for the International Exposition held in Paris in 1878 and purchased by the Museum für Volkerkunde in Vienna at its close. Its

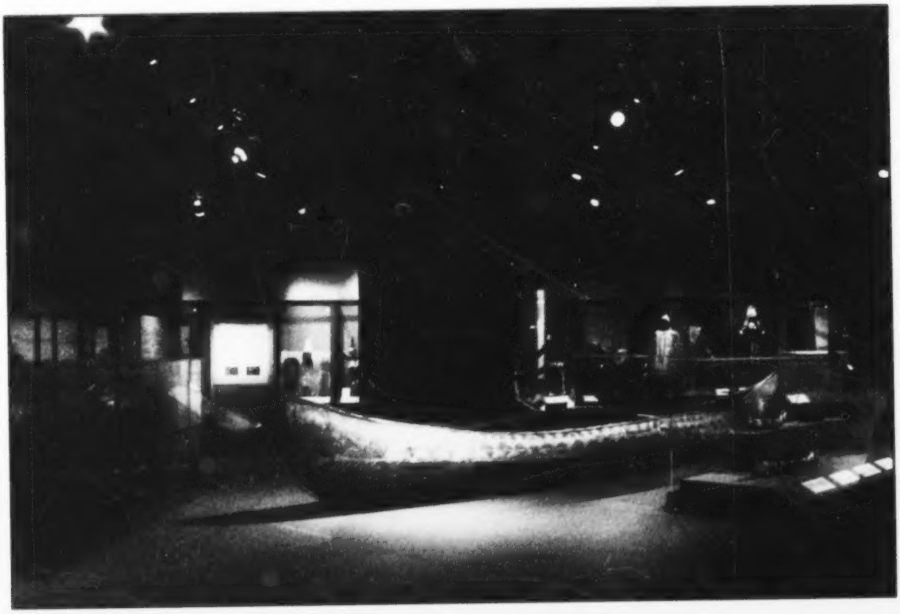

Figure 5
"The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples," Glenbow Museum, Calgary, 15 January – 1 May 1988. Installation photograph. The installation of Mi'kmaq objects in the exhibition featured a canoe originally made for the 1878 Paris International Exposition and ornamented in the manner of fancy work made for sale to tourists.
Photograph: Glenbow Museum.

lavish sgrafitto decoration is more typical of the "fancy" wares produced by northeastern First Nations peoples for the flourishing Victorian souvenir trade than of "authentic" canoes made for Native use. When asked by a reporter on what grounds the Mi'kmaq claim was being made, Jill said simply, "because it's the only one there is."[8] His statement implies not only a contemporary Mi'kmaq view of authenticity, but also an absolute value for the objects made by ancestors regardless of whether they were made for internal use or for the tourist trade – an assertion made many times before and since by other First Nations people (Doxtator 1995, Rickard 1992, Todd 1992).

A second intervention made by Chief Joe Norton and Billy Two Rivers, Mohawk representatives from Kahnawake, targeted the display of sacred objects. They announced the launch of a law suit against the Glenbow Museum demanding the removal of a *Ga:goh:sah* (False Face mask) from the exhibition on the grounds that it was a medicine object intended to be seen only by community members and that its public display would cause irreparable harm to the Mohawk (Bell 1992). Although this suit was not upheld by the court, the Canadian Museum of Civilization decided to replace the mask with a modern replica for the Ottawa venue.[9] Continuing Iroquois interventions during the following decade have caused *Ga:goh:sah* to be removed from public display in most North American museums. Since False Face masks are the largest and most dramatic sculptural forms made by the Iroquois in historic times and have been the centerpieces of virtually every twentieth-century exhibition that included Iroquois material, these interventions have radically altered the "canon" of Iroquois art (fig. 6). Similar interventions by representatives of other First Nations groups have forced the removal from the field of vision of other object types long prized by Western art connoisseurs.[10]

Frequently, the strategy of removal has been accompanied by a complementary strategy of insertion. Genres of commoditized, often stylistically hybrid objects are now filling the vacant slots in the canon. For example, moosehair and porcupine-quilled birchbark items made by Huron-Wendat and Anishnabe women and beadwork made by Iroquois women for sale at Niagara Falls and other northeastern tourist resorts, have been featured in recent exhibits organized both by Native and non-Native curators.[11] Similarly, the removal of Salish *swaixwe* masks is paralleled by new displays of contemporary blankets produced since the 1980s through the revival of a traditional art that had nearly died out (fig. 7).[12] Iroquois artists and curators have been particularly eloquent in their assertion of the authenticity of the commoditized, contact-zone wares made by their forebears. For example, in his choice of objects for the inaugural exhibition "All Paths Are Good" at the New York venue of the National Museum of the American Indian, Tom Hill juxtaposed a Euro-Canadian-style straw boater woven by an Iroquois basketmaker with a *gustoweh*, the traditional hat worn as part of an Iroquois man's ceremonial dress (fig. 8). Tuscarora curators and artists Jolene Rickard and Rick Hill have made similar interventions in their recent projects (Rickard 1992, R. Hill 1992). The accomplishment of these interventions has entailed further modification of canons of Native North American art that have historically favoured monumentality over miniaturization and have typically privileged materials familiar to Western fine art genres such as wood, stone, metal, and ceramic over "craft" materials such as cloth, fibre, and beads.

I have dwelt on eastern Canada at some length because that region, which has the longest history of contact with Europeans, constitutes the extreme case. If commoditized, stylistically hybrid souvenir and craft objects cannot be accepted as authentic Mi'kmaq or Malecite "art" then those people have no authentic historic art – a view I regard either as an absurdity or as a convincing reason to replace "art" with "visual culture" in the new, pluralist museum. But this issue is also of great importance to the Aboriginal arts of other regions of Canada. As the visitor to "The Spirit Sings" moved west through the Northern Woodlands, the Plains, the Western

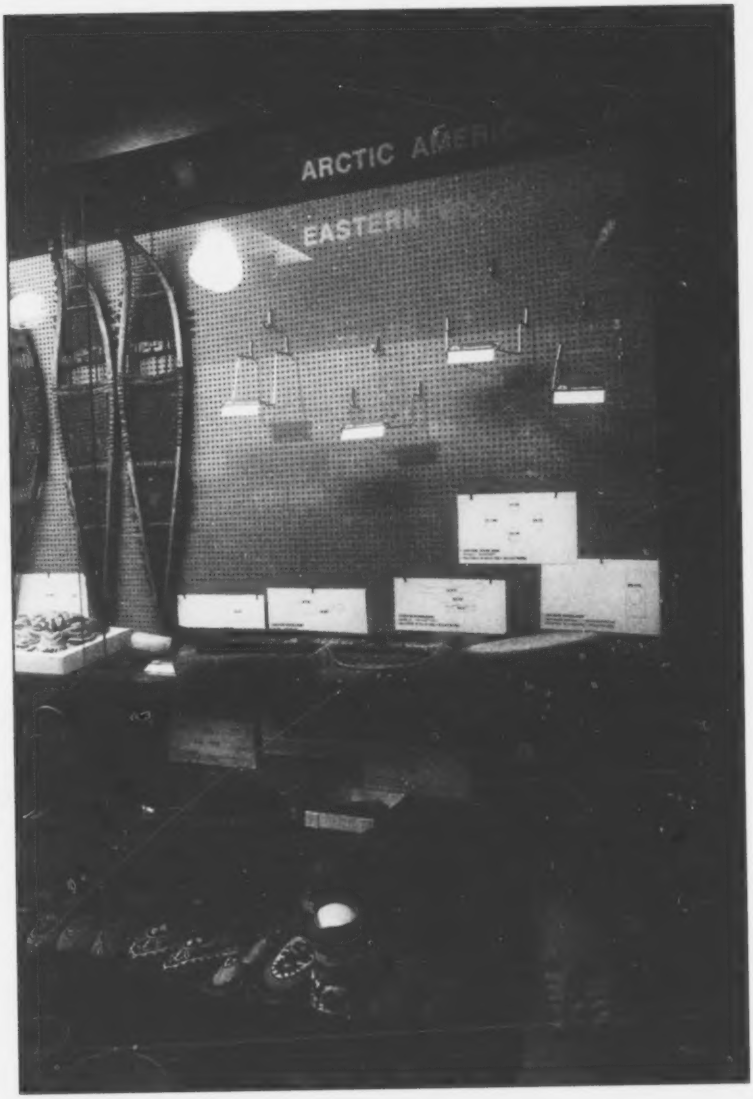

Figure 6
University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, 1997. Installation photograph. Like many other museums, the Museum of Anthropology has removed False Face masks (*Ga:Goh:Sah*) from the visible storage area at the request of Iroquois representatives. The strategy of removal is reversing appropriations of Native North American objects into the category of "primitive art" that began in the early twentieth century. Photograph: Ruth Phillips.

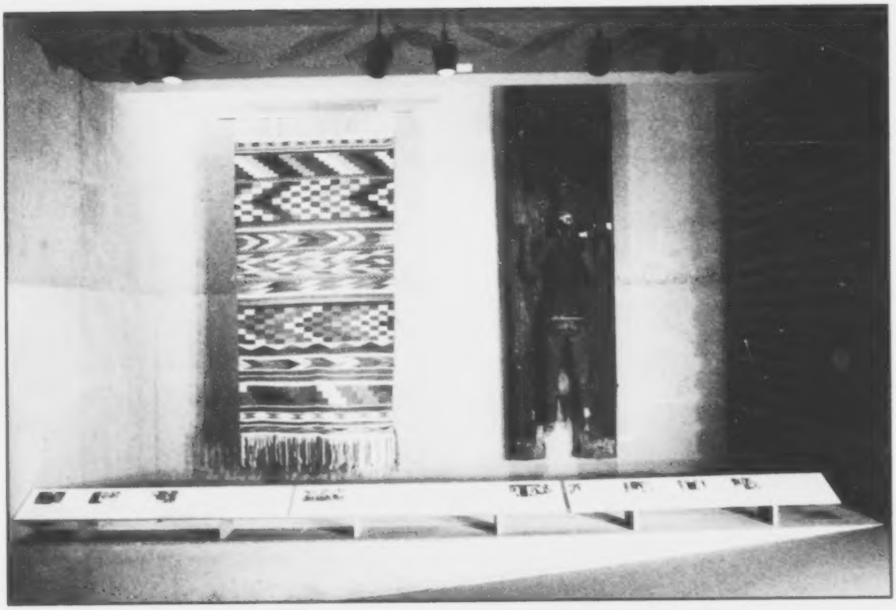

Figure 7
University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, 1998. Installation photograph. The placement of a contemporary Musqueam weaving (an art revived in several Salish communities in the 1980s) next to an "authentic" late nineteenth-century Musqueam houseboard is an example of the alteration of the canon through a strategy of insertion. Photograph: Bill McLennan.

Subarctic, the Northwest Coast, and the Arctic, the ratios of souvenir objects to objects made by Aboriginal people for their own use gradually decreased, although every region included a healthy representation of both souvenir and stylistically hybrid productions. Despite their ubiquity, histories of commoditized production have often been obscured by or omitted from the documentation accompanying objects when they enter museum collections, and these histories continue to be masked by the conventions of museum display. For example, Molly Lee has shown that many, if not most, of the Alaskan Eskimo tool kits that entered ethnology museums around 1900 were replicas that had been made specifically for sale during the heyday of Victorian tourist trade along the Inside Passage (Lee 1991). It is very likely that the same was true for similar Canadian Inuit items exhibited in "The Spirit Sings." Although, on the whole, the Northwest Coast section of the exhibition probably contained the lowest proportion of objects made for trade, there has been a notable trend in recent scholarship by Macnair (1998), McLennan and Duffek (2000), Wright

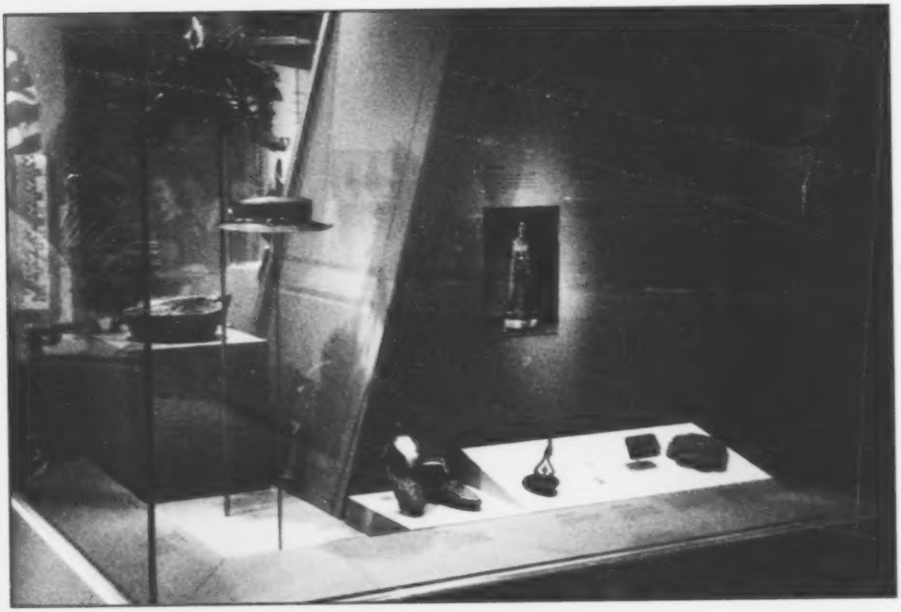

Figure 8
"All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture," National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, 30 October 1994 – 1 February 1998. Installation photograph. Iroquois curator and art historian Tom Hill juxtaposed a Euro-American straw boater and a traditional Iroquois "*gustoweh*" (upper left), together with other "hybrid" and commoditized objects, in the component he curated for the National Museum of the American Indian's inaugural 1994 exhibit. Photograph: Ruth Phillips.

(2000), and others to reidentify many objects collected during the nineteenth century (the early contact period on the Northwest coast) as having been made specifically for sale (fig. 9). In this region, too, as Aaron Glass's contribution to this book shows, we need to consider objects produced for non-Native consumers as an outgrowth of the already existing commoditization of art for trade among indigenous communities on the Northwest Coast.

The broad pattern, then, is clear. Commoditized curio and souvenir productions for non-Native consumption began as soon as trade was established. In the early years of trade and colonization, commoditization entailed the replication of objects that were also being made for Native use. In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the establishment of tourism – an integral byproduct of Western industrial modernity (MacCannell 1976) – increasingly innovative and stylistically hybrid forms of souvenir production emerged exclusively for consumption by non-Natives. These souvenir arts were deemed inauthentic under the essentialist paradigm accepted

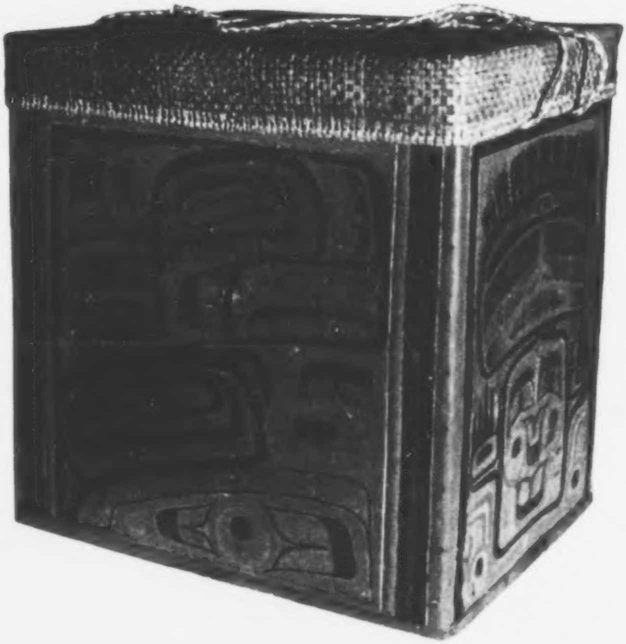

Figure 9

This bentwood box has been attributed to a Heiltsuk artist active around 1900 who has been identified by Bill McLennan and Heiltsuk descendants as Captain Carpenter. Carpenter carved and painted both non-traditional and traditional types of objects – the latter both for First Nations and non-First Nations patrons. Glenbow Museum AA598. Photograph: Bill McLennan.

both by Victorian cultural evolutionist students of material culture and Victorian and early twentieth-century consumers influenced by antimodernism (Lears 1981). The virulent rejection of the hybrid can be illustrated by the corrosively ironic account, in a travel book written by Douglas Sladen, of the formal dress worn by Huron-Wendat during the 1890s. For example, he described the hat worn by the wife of "the chief of the Hurons" as "an old chimney-pot hat, with a long broad sash of the brightest Mrs. Gladstone blue tied round it in the most approved funeral fashion. She looked very fine in that" (Sladen 1895, 61–2). It is important to stress here that ceremonial dress and body decoration were central forms of visual expressive culture long before contact. The style of dress worn in the late nineteenth century had been traditional for more than a hundred and fifty years, was regularly painted by eighteenth-century British topographical painters such as James Peachy, and was widely enjoyed by elite British consumers as picturesque.

Historical Contingency: Production, Collecting, Taste, and Value

The contrast between the picturesque aesthetic of late eighteenth-century collectors and the nostalgic desire for lost authenticity of the late nineteenth century (illustrated by the contrast between Peachy and Sladen) provides a useful introduction to a second aspect of the problem faced by contemporary art galleries in exhibiting Native-made objects that have been categorized as souvenir arts or craft: the contingency of the historical record. In order to work effectively with the collections we have, it is important to understand the roles played in the formation of those collections by collectors' tastes and by Native agency under different historical epistemes (Foucault 1970). The healthy representation of souvenir and craft in "The Spirit Sings," for example, is an artifact of the positive valuation and the privileging of such objects by pre-Victorian collectors. Before the mid nineteenth century, collectors (especially members of the gentry and the aristocracy) valued and actively acquired precisely those objects that came to be rejected by Victorian intellectuals. Douglas Sladen's eighteenth-century ancestor, if he traveled to North America, undoubtedly eagerly acquired examples and representations of the Native dress so sarcastically dismissed by his descendant.

To begin with, it is important to acknowledge the negative as well as the positive spaces in the object record, and to examine the processes of negotiation that produced both. During the early contact period, when Aboriginal people retained considerable political power in their interactions with non-Native peoples and when their economic bases were less disturbed, they were better able to control the flow of objects to consumers through three different and deliberate strategies: the refusal to alienate certain types of objects; the purposeful presentation of gifts; and entrepreneurial commoditization. These three strategies evolved in negotiation with the tastes and desires of European collectors and recipients. Native refusals to trade ritual objects, combined with an abhorrence for such objects on the part of non-Native colonists and officials, undoubtedly account for the rarity of carved masks, painted drums, and shaman's garments or implements in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century collections (fig. 10). These spiritually active and ritually functional objects would not become appropriated into the category of "art" until the early twentieth century.

Only exceptional circumstances caused Aboriginal people to relinquish powerful and ritually active objects during the early contact period. During the seventeenth century, Jesuit missionaries demanded that converts to Christianity surrender personal

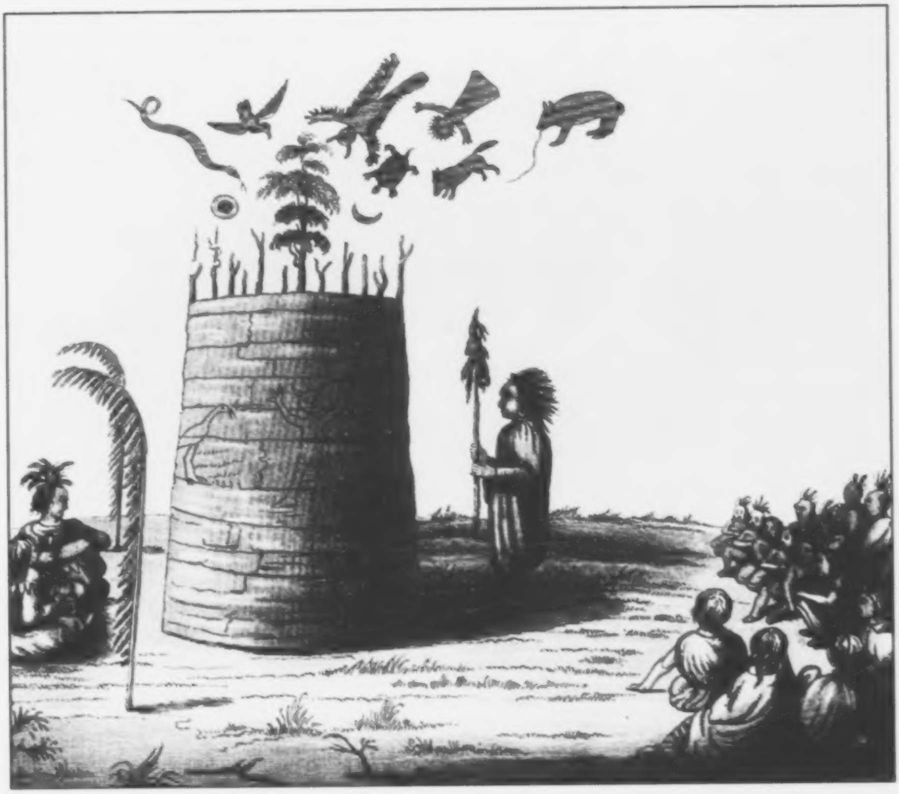

Figure 10
Among the many gaps that skew the "representative" nature of extant collections of Anishnabe art are objects related to the ritual and ceremonial practices of shamans, such as those pictured in this illustration by Seth Eastman. The illustration is from Henry Schoolcraft, *Historical and statistical information respecting the history, condition and prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States: Collected and prepared under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs per act of Congress of March 3rd, 1847*, illustrated by Seth Eastman, 6 vols (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1851–57; reprint New York: Paladin Press, 1969), vol. 5, pl. 32, fig. 1 (between pp. 428–9).

medicine objects, which the missionaries usually destroyed. They particularly prized the surrender of a shaman's medicine objects. Later, with losses of land and traditional sources of economic subsistence, the monetary value of ritual objects sometimes drove Aboriginal people to sell them. The absence of dance masks and other types of regalia from early Northwest collections has been documented by Jonathan King and others. King notes that Aboriginal people would have refused to part with important ceremonial objects, and also points out the fact that the early fur traders were not present on the coast during the winter ceremonial season when the masks and other carvings so admired by later collectors were brought out (King 1981). Collectors' tastes were also an important factor. Before the establishment of a scientific paradigm of ethnological collecting, both Christian scruples and aesthetic tastes were behind the rejection of objects associated with indigenous spirituality as "pagan" and "grotesque." Furthermore, such objects did not fit easily into the domestic spaces of curiosity display. There is evidence that some garments that were collected were used as dress up clothing by children and worn at costume balls by grown-ups.[13] During the Victorian era, many missionaries participated either directly or indirectly in the project of professional ethnological collecting for museums. They accepted the "scientific" value of even the "pagan" objects whose use they were trying to stop; moreover, they used the money they earned both from helping to commission baskets and other commoditized arts and from acting as middle men in the acquisition of ceremonial objects to finance their missionary activities (McClendon 1998, Cole 1985). As a result, there is a much larger number of extant ceremonial objects from Northwest Coast and Arctic peoples, who were contacted and missionized from the nineteenth century on, than from regions where these historical processes occurred earlier.

Late eighteenth-century collectors steeped in the new scientific curiosity about world cultures associated with the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment stand out as important exceptions to this pattern. The naturalists who accompanied Captain Cook and other early explorers of the Northwest Coast set out to make systematic collections of Aboriginal material culture. The British army doctor Edward Walsh, trained in Glasgow and a typical product of the Scottish Enlightenment, provides another example. During his service in Canada he developed a plan to collect comprehensive information and artifacts from the central Great Lakes region with the aid of fellow army officers, whom he asked to collect data about all aspects of the natural environment and human cultures and to help "in procuring some little Curiosities – some Indian matting, original wampum of their own manufacture, any curious article of Dress of the remote Tribes, curious Birds, serpents, and insects." Among the items in the collection he assembled for the "Chelsea Museum" was an exception that proves the rule of First Nations resistance to the surrender of ritual items: a shaman's headdress that was probably presented to him by Native people whom he had innoculated against smallpox.[14]

The early appearance of designated curio productions is illustrated by the report of the Sieur de Diereville, in his 1708 book, that the Mi'kmaq were producing for sale a type of richly quill-decorated moccasins they wore only for special occasions because the French "wish to procure them for display in their own Land" (Diereville 1933, 67). This report belongs to the opening chapter of a long history of entrepreneurial Aboriginal art commodity production. As I have discussed in more detail elsewhere

(Phillips 1998), eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century visitors to Canada enthusiastically sought out these purpose-made souvenir arts. They actively appreciated Native people's ingenious use of indigenous materials and dyes and superior artisanal skills, and collected their manufactures in part as models for Europeans. That the authenticity of a curio was not identified in essentialist terms with the identity of the maker during this period is strongly suggested by the popularity of the "Indian" souvenirs made by non-Native Québec nuns and by the efforts of well-born European women to learn the art of moosehair embroidery (Phillips 1998). Far from being worried by stylistic hybridity, mid nineteenth-century collectors such as the Austrian church painter Martin Pitzer and the anthropologist Louis Henry Morgan praised the imitative and innovative abilities of Odawa and Seneca artists as evidence of their innate abilities and "civilizability" (Phillips 1998, chap. 6). Between the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, soldiers in the service of leaders such as the great old-master collector Herzog Anton Ulrich, the eminent naturalist Prince Maximilian von Wied, the "father of American anthropology" Louis Henry Morgan, the Governor General of Canada Lord Elgin, and the Prince of Wales, acquired or were presented with examples of the birchbark wares embroidered with porcupine quills or moosehair that would soon come to be scorned by professional ethnologists.[15] Similarly, Haida argillite, a production invented for the curio trade, was sought after by travelers to the Northwest Coast.

The commoditization of Native art expanded rapidly during the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the twin stimuli of Aboriginal economic need and the newly-expanded tourist industry. Indigenous producers read consumer's desires with great acumen, and created many new object types that responded to Victorian aesthetic tastes and to the new consumer market markets for novel, decorative, and useful household objects. However, a gap began to appear between the popular acceptance of these objects by tourists and the essentialist paradigm of authenticity adopted by late nineteenth-century intellectuals and ethnological collectors. The Swedish scholar Hjalmar Stolpe's remarks in his paper, "Studies in American Ornamentation," which was originally published in 1896, may be taken as representative.

> *Another difficulty incident to the material is, that it so often bears obvious traces of the influence of the white man's industry. The furniture nails driven into clubs or pipe-stems, the garniture of glass beads on all sorts of articles, prove that the style is no longer genuine, but spoiled by European importations. And deterioration has gone yet further. The white man's patterns have been simply*

> *imitated, and it is a fact, for example, that the pretty paintings with which the Nenenot (Naskopie) Indians (Algonkin) in Labrador decorate the edges of their skin coats and other garments are copied from the parti-coloured silk handkerchiefs or other similar wares with which trade supplies them.*
>
> Stolpe (1927, 93)

In the floral beadwork of Woodlands and Plains peoples Stolpe could see "nothing but the debasing influence of a vicious style of drawing on the white man's gaudy bartered wares" (Stolpe 1927, 94). For Stolpe, only the material culture of the more remote Dene and Inuit was still "pure" enough to be valuable to scientists intent on tracing patterns of cultural evolution. Stolpe's categorical rejection of stylistic mixing is closely tied to Victorian theories of race, which held that mixing resulted in biological weakening and degeneration (Young 1995, 18–19). In addition, the cultural evolutionists' quest for the authentic and uncontaminated often masked the histories of commoditization and innovation that underlay even the productions they valued. Stolpe's discussion of Haida argillite is a good example. He wrote that, "it should be evident that these slate pipes merit far greater attention than that hitherto accorded to them. But only those examples which are demonstrably ancient, ought to be used as subjects for investigations, because modern products, intended for export, and of obviously European type, abound" (Stolpe 1927, 115). Stolpe did not realize that there were no "ancient," pre-contact examples of argillite pipes because the genre had been invented for sale to European fur traders and curio collectors in the 1820s.

There are several implications of these histories of collecting and production for future museum inclusions of Aboriginal art. The first is the acknowledgment of the fact that the object record of Aboriginal "art" is far more fragmentary than is that of Euro-Canadian fine art. (I will turn to other implications of this problem in the next section.) For the earlier period, especially in central and eastern Canada, ritual and ceremonial objects are under-represented in existing collections because of historical patterns of purposeful destruction, collector rejection, or Aboriginal resistance to sale. For the period since the late nineteenth century, the reverse is true; professional ethnologists programmatically rejected "hybrid" and commoditized objects because they were deemed to be neither authentic nor useful to scientific studies of evolution and historical diffusion. However, private collectors have repaired this gap through their later donations.

Gender and the Hierarchy of Art Forms

I have already referred to the development of distinctive scientific-ethnological and popular-touristic "taste cultures" among Victorian consumers of Native-made objects. I would like now to further complicate this duality by examining the role that gender played in the consumer environment. In this respect it is revealing to contrast Stolpe's evaluations of floral beadwork and argillite with the critical assessments of Aboriginal art commodities displayed and sold at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886. One such assessment was published in *The Queen, the Lady's Newspaper*:

> *The beadwork of the better sort, done by the Redman, is not to be surpassed for well chosen and harmonious colour effect. The patterns are generally composed of ideal flowers. If the designs on them at times leave something better to be desired, yet, on the whole, taking colour as well as form, they are very beautiful specimens of handiwork ... The Indian uses porcupine quills, the hair of the moose, and also scented grasses, that generally take the place of silk or wool, in his embroideries. With silk, which as well as beads, he procures from Europe, through the Hudson's Bay Company, he, and perhaps more particularly the half bred Indian, produces at times some really excellent work of the kind on shirts and jackets of reindeer skin. Although his patterns are occasionally a little stiff and set, he frequently aims at imitating nature in them. In spite of his contact with the white man and what he now supplies for the white man's household – mantel borders, fire screens, hassocks, covers for occasional tables, and other similar things, the flora of his native woods and prairies are lovingly cherished and copied by him in these and work of various kinds, often with very happy results ... the baskets make up in shape what they lack in colour; there are exquisite forms among them, not so delicate as some from the Straits Settlements, already noticed in these pages, but, at the same time, quite as varied. In contrast with the fashioning and finishing of this light work, the carvings in black heavy slate are not a little curious ... The shallow dish and the frog shaped one are unique and grotesque as anything from the hands of the Chinese or Japanese. The miniature model of an Isimschean [sic] "Totum pole" ... was carved by a native of North British Columbia. Poles of the sort vary in height up to forty feet, wrought out of a solid cedar tree,*

> *and are placed at the entrance of dwellings in memory of some ancestor. They are fantastically carved, and painted with symbols of the tribe to which a family belongs. Upon the same pole will often be found forms of various animals, and of the sun, moon, and stars, the whole surmounted by a figure of the ancestor ...* "[16]

I have cited this passage at length because it is so rich in information. The gender bias inscribed by Victorian diction leaps out at a modern reader. The author, J. M. O'Fallon, who was presumably a woman like most of the women's magazine writers, used masculine pronouns throughout the passage even though she must have been well aware that the basketry and beadwork were made by Native women. More importantly, the passage demonstrates the separate sphere of connoisseurship that existed within the female and domestic space of needlework and home decoration during the Victorian era (Parker 1984, Grier 1988). The passage clearly implies that the objects displayed at the Exhibition were being rigorously compared both to needlework and craft work done in other parts of the world and to Victorian women's own home crafts, for which myriad patterns and sets of instructions appeared each week in the multitude of women's magazines published during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The writer evaluates the stylistic rendering of elements of the natural world, and completely reverses Stolpe's judgements in her approval of the Native floral rendering and in her disapproval of the Haida formline-style animals. Basing her opinion on the product rather than the ancestry of the maker, she praises Metis embroidery more highly than that of "purebred" Indians. In her careful evaluation of moosehair, porcupine quills, and ash splints as media she exhibits the technical knowledge and the appreciation of materials of someone who is herself a maker. Perhaps most impressively, when contrasted to many academic students of material culture, she implies a sense of fellowship with Aboriginal makers, an imagined union of Native and non-Native women in a common project of paying tribute to the natural world with renderings of flowers and leaves, "lovingly cherished and copied." The author, in other words, positions her evaluation of Native-made objects not, as the academicians did, in relation to the meta-hierarchy of fine and applied arts or the evolution of cultures, but rather within the enclosed female space of embroidery and home craft production. In contrast also to early twentieth-century modernist appreciators of Primitive Art, she writes from within the aesthetic of idealized naturalism that dominated popular British taste during the Victorian era. Her text is written in relation to readers and consumers caught up in the domestic project of beautifying the home, for whom ideal objects combined use and functionality with aesthetic and decorative qualities and that could therefore contribute to the Victorian middle-class woman's most noble role as the "angel of the house."

As I have mentioned several times in this paper, a significant proportion of the surviving objects made by Aboriginal people during the nineteenth century were made for this domestic, female realm rather than for display in public spaces. As I have also noted, these useful and personal objects are regarded by contemporary First Nations communities as important and traditional cultural and aesthetic heritage. How, then, can such objects be transposed into the public space of the contemporary art gallery? This key question inevitably points to a larger problem: the art gallery representation of the artistic productions of the non-Native women with whose home crafts and needlework arts the Native objects developed in dialogic relationships. To display Native beadwork and embroidery while omitting that of Victorian women is, to my mind, highly problematic. However, the inclusion of such "craft" and "souvenir" objects will logically require an expansion of the range of visual aesthetic genres currently displayed in art galleries, and a rebalancing of the male-dominated, gendered spaces that currently exist. Although the problem is most evident for the Victorian era, I suggest that it will also be important to think in dialogic terms about Native objects made in earlier periods. The bandolier style of quill-embroidered bags worn by Anishnabe warriors during the eighteenth century evolved in response to styles of British military dress. European meerschaum pipes with figurative carvings used for recreational smoking, on the other hand, evolved in response to Native carved pipe bowls made for ritual use. To display First Nations articles of dress or ritual use adjacent to European paintings or sculptures merely because of their contemporaneity is to present Aboriginal and Euro-North American populations as two solitudes. However, the juxtaposition of objects with other items made for the same kinds of uses, particularly in light of a historical relationship, reveals patterns of contact and exchange. Of course, these choices need to be carefully considered in the context of the larger understandings of colonial history that an institution seeks to communicate to its public.

The Art Gallery as a Way of Seeing (not Hearing or Touching)

Thus far, in exploring a set of issues that arise in the incorporation into art galleries of Native-made objects that have been defined as crafts or souvenirs, I have accepted the fundamental definition of the art gallery or museum as a space that privileges seeing over other senses such as hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling, and stillness over movement. In doing so I have confined the discussion within a Western tradition that privileges visuality and that, by definition, prevents some of the most important experiential values associated with objects by Aboriginal people from being engaged. Conventional art gallery displays also impose an extreme form of decontextualization.

In both ethnographic and art museums the carved or painted object has historically been stripped of its accoutrements and isolated to focus the eye on its purely sculptural or painted form. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has shown that all museum objects are fragments, single components removed from aesthetic-cultural complexes made up of different expressive, performative, and ritual elements (1991). This way of seeing is now so thoroughly naturalized that it requires a significant jolt to imagine another way of thinking about and seeing artistically-elaborated objects made by indigenous peoples. From the point of view of many originating communities, however, the processes of fragmentation and selection and the privileging of the visual upon which both are based leave behind the richest and fullest meanings associated with the objects, meanings that reside in the absent contexts of performance, ritual, narrative, dance, song, smell, spatiality, memory, and individual human relationships. What might be an alternative to the art and artifact paradigms that better reflects the meanings and framings Aboriginal people give to the objects they have made historically and continue to make today? We are beginning to get glimpses of new possibilities from the increasing number of interactions between museums and First Nations community members, and from the interventions of First Nations contemporary artists. In the remainder of this paper I would like to talk about two such interactions: one was articulated by a Dene elder, and the other by a First Nations contemporary artist.

Two summers ago I was invited to visit the University of Alaska Museum as a consultant for a new art wing being planned as an addition to its existing anthropology, history, and natural history displays. My visit occurred in tandem with that of Mrs. Poldine Carlo, an Athabascan elder in her late seventies. At the beginning of our day-long session we were presented with a preliminary document prepared by the staff outlining the issues they would like to convey to the public in the new art wing. All are current concerns in the museum world: a reflexive understanding of art and artifact paradigms of display, an awareness of how "art worlds" function to define authenticity, and an awareness of commoditization and collecting as underlying processes.

Mrs. Carlo listened quietly as the academic critiques flew back and forth across the table. After an hour or so she made her first intervention, recalling an earlier occasion when she had come to the Museum to give a beadwork demonstration and had supplied the name of the maker of a beaded coat in the Museum's collection and had identified it as having belonged to a noted healer. The demonstration had gone well, but, she said, "you remember, we said the only thing missing was some strips of dried salmon to chew on." In a seamless verbal linkage she then commented on fish cutting – how hard it is to do well, and how it, too, is an art. She herself was never good at it, she pointed out, although she is good at beadwork and has some pieces in the Museum's collection. Fish cutting became a leitmotif of the day's discussion, reintroduced at intervals by Mrs. Carlo, always lightly and almost humorously.

In the afternoon the three consultants were given a tour of the Museum's storage collections. We ended up in small office, sitting around a table to look at trays of beadwork. The baby carrying straps, the moccasins, and the chiefs' coats were old friends to Mrs. Carlo. The healer's coat she had spoken of that morning was there. She asked about the whereabouts of the herbal medicines, which she thought should have been in the pockets of the coat, and which had subsequently been moved to another, presumably botanical, storage area. The medicines now sit in a little plastic dish next to the coat, still segregated but more proximate – a metaphor, it struck me, of kinds of deposits of information these collaborations usually leave behind. Mrs. Carlo expressed her ambivalence toward the coat, admiring its beadwork but also wary of an object to which medicine power still clings.

In one of the trays was a pair of moccasins embroidered with robins – "nontraditional" motifs within the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Athapascan design vocabulary of geometric quillwork and floral beadwork. In another seamless transition Mrs. Carlo began to speak about these moccasins. She told us how, for her, they recalled the death a few years earlier of her husband of fifty-two years. She spoke of her deep grief after his death and of how one day, looking out the window, she had seen a robin; she thought that instead of just crying she would compose a song for him, a song whose last verse would be sung to the tune the musicians always struck up when they arrived at a dance – Fats Waller's "Blueberry Hill." Sitting in the clinical basement room, surrounded by computers, a lab sink, bookcases, and desks, Mrs. Carlo sang her mourning song in a soft, clear voice. She sang in Koyukon, the first verses to a traditional tune, and the last combining a familiar melody with strange syllables, but composed in a "proper" Koyukon manner. After she had finished she commented on the loss of Koyukon as a language and, with it, on the loss of the ability to make up songs. These traditions will not survive into the next generation, she said. We, her audience, were silenced and deeply moved by this performance. Mrs. Carlo's earlier anecdotes of fish cutting and her singing of the mourning song had been carefully calculated to shift us away from our exclusive focus on objects, whether as art or as artifact. As the mother of a well-known carver of masks, and an experienced museum consultant, Mrs. Carlo is woman long accustomed to white people's obsessions with objects. The seeming casualness and indirection of her remarks, then, was in fact actually intended to introduce an alternative discourse about how "art" might be present and presented in the Museum's new wing, not centred upon the objects, but dematerialized, residing in the song and the story.

In writing of the relationship of autobiography, oral tradition, and the production of visual art in connection with another Dene woman, Mrs. Kitty Smith, Julie Cruickshank makes a number of important observations on the relationship between story and object among the Dene and on the hierarchy of cultures that has been produced in Western texts based on the ability to produce objects that can be easily appropriated as "art." Her comments are relevant to many if not most First Nations.

> *For people whose successful harvesting of resources depended on strategies of mobility, priorities differed . . . They were more inclined to carry essential ideas in intricately woven narratives than in cumbersome material objects ... If museum discourse emphasizes the importance of using words to describe, interpret and give meaning to the physical objects of collection, indigenous discourse, at least in this instance from the Subarctic, suggests that it is spoken words which are primary, and that material objects essentially provide illustrations for particularly meaningful stories ... To the extent that objects and stories have been physically separated, the concern these elders have is to reconstitute the dispersed fragments.*
>
> Cruickshank (1995, 28)

Over and over again, when elders visit museums they emphasize the holistic meanings of objects.[17] These statements, I believe, belong to our particular historical moment, a time in which we are involved in a restoration, and a reinsertion of personal and communal histories that have been erased and cancelled by the assimilationist dogmas that conditioned the lives of the elders who speak to us, and that prevented the orderly handing down of community tradition and memory. Art galleries, like other institutions, cannot ignore the social and historical contexts in which they function, and in responding to them appropriately, galleries will facilitate the work of moving on to a future phase in which objects might be displayed in different ways.

Contemporary Aboriginal artists are also contributing to the discussion about "craft" commoditization and souvenir arts through discourses articulated in their works. Iroquois photographer and installation artist Shelley Niro was recently invited to create a work that reflected on Iroquois beadwork for the current exhibition "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life." Niro's piece, *Thinking Caps*, complements Poldine Carlo's interventions in its insistence on attributing to beadwork meanings and contexts that are outside the normal Western frame of reference (fig. 11). The curators of "Across Borders" sought to recuperate commercial beadwork from the limbo of the acculturated, the decorative, and the inauthentic. *Thinking Caps* attempts the

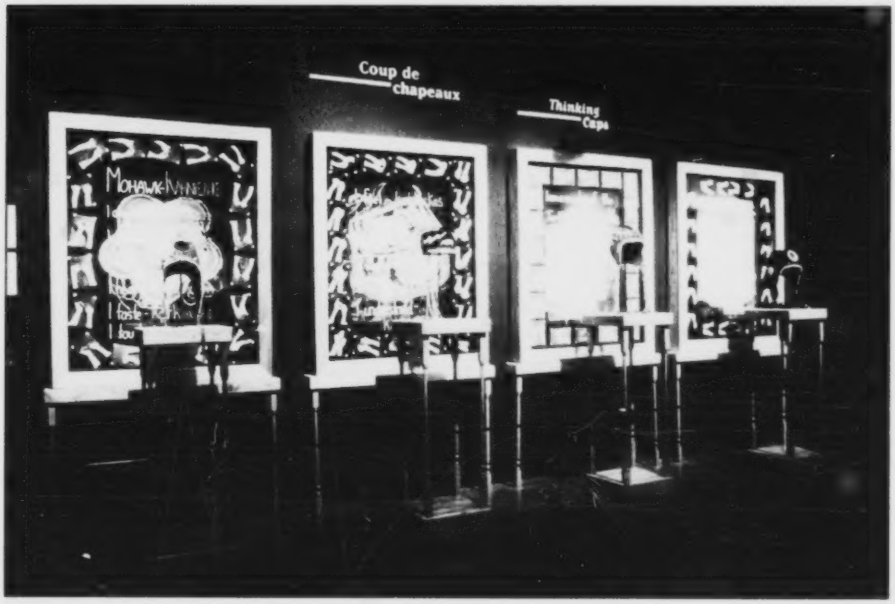

Figure 11
Shelley Niro, *Thinking Caps*, 1999. Installation. "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life," McCord Museum, Montréal, 18 June 1999 – 9 January 2000. Shelley Niro's installation, created for the exhibit "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life," produces authenticity around Iroquois women's arts that have been largely excluded from art galleries as minor, hybrid, touristic and inauthentic. Photograph: McCord Museum.

same thing through the medium of installation art. Niro combines the "craft" medium of beadwork with painting, collage, photography, and installation to reflect on the resonances of beadwork for Iroquois women. The work consists of four beaded hats made by the artist, each of which sits on a pedestal-like table in front of a two-dimensional mixed-media work composed of a central text framed by overlapping snapshots of female hands making beadwork. Each of the four units represents a different age. The first is the child: the motifs on her hat show her to be still close to the sky world, and the text behind articulates her discovery of sensory capacities. Then come the young woman, exploring her rational, visionary, and expressive capacities, and the mature woman, taking responsibility for social and political action. The final unit is the old woman, re-approaching the sky world through love, wisdom, and a fully-realized spirituality. In one sense, Niro's feminist strategy in this work is complementary to that of contemporary artist Lisa Lou, who has created room-sized installations of domestic spaces (*Kitchen* and *Back Yard*) entirely covered with beads. Rather than monumentalizing beadwork, however, Niro's installation remakes beadwork garments in new forms that bring to the surface their conceptual resonance, and that endow craft with the intellectual and spiritual expressive force conventionally associated with art. To do this she, like Judy Chicago, invents a new iconography that makes visible the profound meanings with which women have always endowed their aesthetic creations. Yet, like Liza Lou, Niro's use of the museum space and the installation genre is transformative. *Thinking Caps*, translates the beadwork of nineteenth-century Iroquois women into the language of contemporary art, and in so doing, forces us to see it both in a new light and on its own terms.

Thinking Caps advances some of the ideas developed in Niro's 1995 installation *Chiquita, Bunny, Stella*, in which she placed a corn husk doll and examples of beadwork in museum cases placed in front of photographic portraits of the makers. In this work and in *Thinking Caps*, Niro is also commenting on museum installation itself. The pedestals elevate and the boxes isolate: these two gestures, central to the Western museum, seem subtly ironic and absurd in relation to objects so clearly intended to be held, worn, played with. As with Zachary (a character in Niro's film *Honey Moccasin*), the urban Indian returned to the res who steals all the beaded pow wow regalia, the removal of objects to the museum can arrest fundamental cultural processes. Yet Niro, along with other contemporary artists and despite her ambivalence, is willing to work with the museum and the gallery and to work within their contemporary spatial and institutional conventions. (The alter ego in *Honey Moccasin* is a young art school graduate who makes film and performance art.) Niro's is an art of mediation between community and art world sensibilities.

The question remains whether the museum as an institution can accommodate the alternative paradigms suggested by the interventions of Poldine Carlo and Shelley Niro, or whether – despite all the hypertext that might be fed into video monitors placed in public galleries – the auras of the objects and the inherent nature of the museum as "a way of seeing" (Alpers 1991) will always overwhelm story, song, and local meaning. Although today many Canadian museums are committed to a representational process that is sensitive to alternate understandings of the object and of "art," the weight of tradition hangs heavily over the art gallery. It is physically fixed in the masonry, the walls, the light tracks, and the geometries of the built environment into which these objects are brought. To transform the art gallery from the proper place for "art" to a venue for the proper arts of the place – for the objects made by the First Nations whose deepest roots are in the land – we will have to be open to the new kinds of expressive spaces that these objects create around themselves. If we do this, their presence will have a transformative effect on the art gallery, opening it up to new experiences of the visual cultures of both Native and non-Native peoples.

Notes

1. Key critiques of primitivism were put forward by Price 1989, Clifford 1988, McEvilley 1984, Torgovnik 1990, Hiller 1991, and more recently by Connelly 1995.
2. See, for example, Clifford 1988a, McEvilley 1984, and Foster 1985.
3. See Ames 1988; Trigger 1988; Harrison 1988, 1995; and Phillips 2000.
4. This debate stimulated an unprecedented self-examination on the part of Canadian museums of their basic assumptions, practices, and power structures with regard to indigenous cultures, and ultimately resulted in a new set of guidelines published as the report of the national Task Force on Museums and First Peoples: Canadian Museums Association and Assembly of First Nations, *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships between Museums and First Peoples* (Ottawa: Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, 1992).
5. See Phillips and Steiner 1999a for a discussion of the close interrelationship between the artifactual canons constructed by anthropologists and those constructed by art historians and critics.
6. See Glenbow Museum 1987 for a catalogue of all the objects in the exhibition.
7. Although "The Spirit Sings" focused on "artistic traditions," it was organized by the ethnology division of the Glenbow Museum and supported by the ethnology division of the National Museum of Man. It was originally intended to be the opening exhibit of the new Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC). Because the CMC was not ready in time, the exhibition was presented by the CMC in the Lorne Building recently vacated by the National Gallery of Canada. Thus, for Ottawa viewers who saw the show in spaces that still held strong memories of the display of European and Euro-Canadian "fine arts," the show had even stronger resonances.
8. *The Globe and Mail*, 15 January 1988, reported on the conference. The statement about moral rights is from the notes I made at the time. Although the Mi'kmaq did not, in the end, bring a legal case against the Glenbow, a project was eventually facilitated by the Canadian Museum of Civilization that allowed Mi'kmaq to replicate the canoe.
9. The replica was carved by the late Chief Jacob Thomas, a respected carver and Faith Keeper (or leader) of the False Face Society at the Six Nations Reserve. In Thomas's opinion, masks not carved in the ritually correct way do not have medicine power and can be commoditized and displayed. Other Iroquois representatives disagree, and oppose the display and reproduction of all images of *Ga:goh:sah*. See Phillips 2002 for further discussion of this issue.
10. The most famous case is the repatriation for reburial of Zuni *ahayu:da* (War Gods). Similarly, Plains peoples have caused medicine bundles and pipes to be removed from exhibitions or repatriated from museums. For example, items were removed from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts 1993 exhibition "Visions of the People." More recently, in January 2000, the Glenbow Museum announced a large-scale return of Blackfoot objects.
11. See Phillips 1998. "Creation's Journey," the largest of the inaugural exhibitions at the National Museum of the American Indian's George Gustav Heye Center in New York City featured such objects in the introductory section. See also "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life" organized by the McCord Museum of Canadian History with the Castellani Art Gallery of Niagara University, which opened in 1999. A catalogue is in preparation.

12. Two such blankets were displayed at the entrance to the Vancouver Art Gallery's 1998 exhibition of Northwest Coast masks, "Down from the Shimmering Sky." The Musqueam (Coast Salish) First Nation representative who spoke at the exhibition opening stated explicitly that these blankets had been chosen to represent the community in lieu of ritual masks which could not be displayed. In 1999 the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology added a contemporary blanket to its permanent installation of Musqueam monumental sculpture. See Roy 1999 for a discussion of the history of Salish self-representation through displays of art during the twentieth century.

13. See Phillips 1998, 246, 250, 308 n 61. Other examples of the use of clothing in ways that would have led to its eventual wearing out and discard include an Innu (Naskapi) painted coat now in the National Museum of Scotland that was used as a theatrical costume prior to its acquisition by the museum, and early-collected Cree clothing, held by the Livrustkammarn in Stockholm, that was probably used as costume in mock jousts held by courtiers. Moira McCaffrey of the McCord Museum of Canadian History notes that Plains clothing in that collection was worn by future donors at costume balls in Montréal during the early twentieth century (personal communication, 1996).

14. The present whereabouts of this and other items collected by Walsh are unknown. See Phillips 1987, 68–9.

15. See Phillips 2001 for a more detailed discussion of these collectors and their activities.

16. J. M. O'Fallon, Industrial Art at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition: The Dominion of Canada. In *The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper*, 6 November 1886, 536.

17. See Clifford 1997, chap. 7, and Doxtator 1995. Gitk'san artist and curator Doreen Jensen also used fish cutting as her example for explaining the method used by her mother to transmit skills (personal communication, 15 January 2000).

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Crossing New Borders to Exhibit Iroquois Tourist Art

Moira T, McCaffrey

Museums and the collections they house have recently become the focus of renewed interest and interpretation. Nowhere is this more evident than in museums with ethnographic collections, as demonstrated by the proliferation of journal papers and other publications dealing with issues of representation and authenticity (Ames 1992; Clifford 1988, 1997; Fienup-Riordan 1999; Henderson and Kaeppler 1999; Karp and Levine 1991; Root 1996; Thomas 1996; Winch 2000). A number of factors account for this increased attention. After a long hiatus, the past few decades have witnessed a return to material culture studies within the disciplines of anthropology and history (Myers 2000). Moreover, the field of ethnohistory is being transformed by the gradual abandonment of deterministic models of cultural interaction and the adoption of models that strive to recognize and describe the complexity and emergent properties inherent in culture contact situations (Trigger 1989, 329–69; White 1991). Perhaps most importantly, museums have been "pushed" into a new era of consultation and collaboration by Native people themselves. In Canada, the controversy ignited by "The Spirit Sings" exhibition in 1988, and the ensuing recommendations of the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples (1992) has prompted museum professionals to question what they do and why they do it.

My paper explores one aspect of this changing museum landscape: the exhibition of Aboriginal souvenir art, and in particular, questions arising from the display of Aboriginal material culture in art galleries with or alongside Euro-Canadian art. First, I examine the issues related to museum representation, especially the challenge of countering stereotypes that portray Aboriginal culture as locked in the past. Next, I outline current developments in the study of souvenir art, focusing on discussions of authenticity and the impact of this discourse on our understanding of the objects that comprise museum collections (fig. 12).

In the second part of the paper, I present a case study that demonstrates how issues related to representation, authenticity, and collaboration can play out in the real

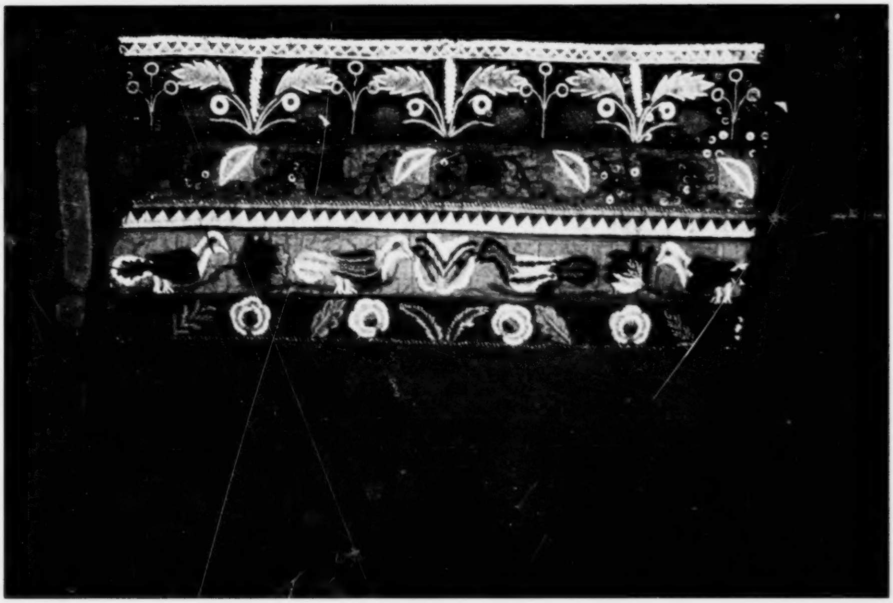

Figure 12
Cradle shade, Iroquois, mid to late nineteenth century, maker unknown. McCord Museum, Montréal. Photograph: McCord Museum.

world of museum exhibits. "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life" is a 4000-square-foot travelling exhibition that displays more than 350 examples of Iroquois beadwork – new items commissioned from living beadwork artists as well as historic objects, the majority of which are beaded souvenirs made for the tourist market between about 1840 to 1920. I conclude by suggesting that galleries must fully embrace the challenge to pursue new ways of organizing and presenting art exhibits.

The discussion that follows owes much to the fertile exchange that took place over a period of about five years among members of the "Across Borders" curatorial team. They are Kanatakta (Mohawk), executive director, Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center; Sandra Olsen, director, and Kate Koperski, curator of folk arts, Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University; Moira McCaffrey, director of research and exhibitions, McCord Museum; Trudy Nicks, curator of ethnology, Royal Ontario Museum; Ruth B. Phillips, director, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia; and Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora), assistant professor, University of Buffalo. This group comprises both Iroquois and non-Iroquois researchers and includes art historians, anthropologists, an artist, an archaeologist, and a folk art specialist. Moreover,

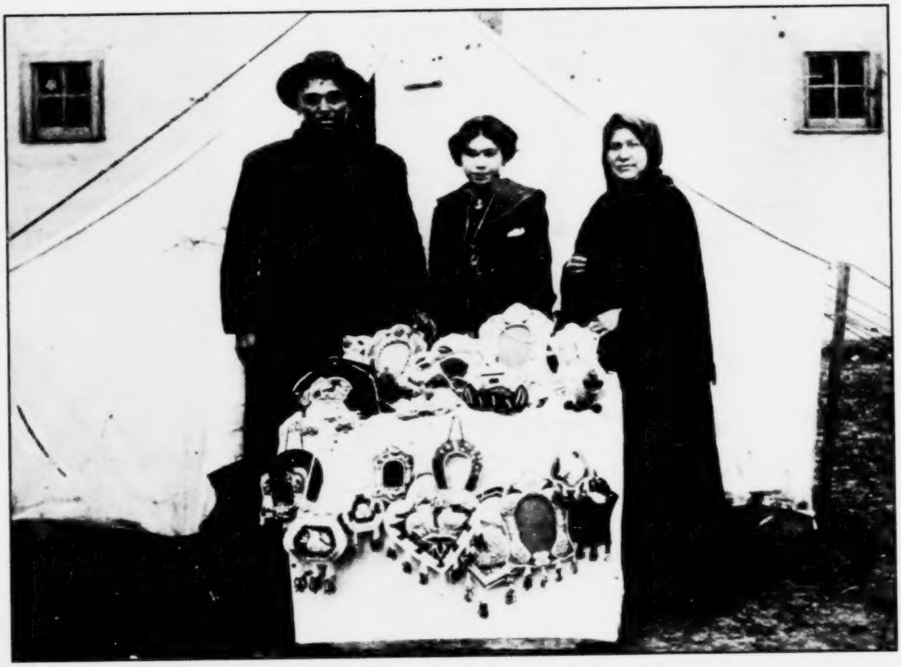

Figure 13
Iroquois vendors selling beadwork at a booth, probably in Kahnawake, 1906. Photograph: Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center, Kahnawake.

beadworkers from the Iroquois communities of Kahnawake and Tuscarora, the two major historic centres of commodified beadwork production, took part in shaping the exhibition from the onset (fig. 13).

Representing the Past and Future in the Present

> *Labelled and displayed behind glass, inert and mute, museum exhibits seem to belong to some other time. Removed from their living environment, artefacts on display appear as human taxidermy. They are appropriated by the visitor or reader; and they are diminished by being encompassed within a necessarily limited understanding. The modernity, vitality and real richness of cultures we may wish to celebrate are easily smothered.*
>
> Brody (1987: xiv–xv)

To understand the issues surrounding the display of Aboriginal tourist art in art galleries, we first need to briefly examine the changing role of museums in representing Native peoples in general. As James Clifford has pointed out, "museums create the illusion of adequate representation of a world by first cutting objects out of specific contexts (whether cultural, historic, or intersubjective) and making them 'stand for' abstract wholes" (1988, 220). In such a process, Aboriginal peoples are often portrayed as living in an ethnographic present – locked in an exotic and often romanticized past (Fabian 1983, Price 1989). John Kelly (2000) has aptly referred to this phenomenon as museum representation that privileges the glorification of "nature, natives, and nations."

This criticism was in fact leveled at "The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples," the controversial exhibition organized by the Glenbow Museum to coincide with the 1988 Winter Olympics. As the Aboriginal contemporary artist Joane Cardinal-Shubert argued, "Although the works were aesthetically pleasing, they were frozen in time – objects lifeless without their function." She contended that the exhibition portrayed Native culture as "dead, wrapped up, over and collected" (1977, 125).

A similar concern was expressed by the historian Richard White (1997) in his review of three ethnographic exhibitions. White noted that museums have gradually shifted the emphasis of their exhibits from an anthropological focus to an interest in objects as examples of Native art. "The curators have banished history from art, even though in object after object the history of cultural contact stares the viewer in the face." Furthermore, he argued that "The current tendency to put the 'sacred,' the 'traditional,' the 'natural' and the 'artistic' at the heart of all Indian life obscures the commercial, the bureaucratic, the secular, the inventive" (White 1997, 31, 33). White concluded that this approach ultimately reproduces the oldest and most lasting tradition in the representation of Aboriginal people – that they are a people without history.

Recently a number of anthropologists have expressed a highly pessimistic outlook on the future role that museums can play in the representation of Native peoples. They argue that because images of the Other constructed by museums are constrained by available collections of objects gathered in the past, exhibits are doomed to irrelevancy (Dahl and Stade 2000, 165). Jonathan Haas has gone so far as to suggest that "aging collections" have become an oppressive burden on museum anthropology. He proposes that museums shift their central focus from what he calls "increasingly obsolete collections" to broader principles of public learning (Haas 1996, 10–12).

Ironically, this bleak forecast comes at a time when the potential for insight and knowledge contained in historic museum objects is being rediscovered. Those of us who work in museums with ethnographic collections can attest to increased research requests and visits by Native and non-Native academics and researchers, elders and school children, artists and craftspeople. Moreover, there is a strong will on the part of many museum staff members and a determination among Aboriginal culture workers to curate collections and to create exhibitions collaboratively – a situation that is inspiring a new generation of historical and artistic projects. Far from being irrelevant, objects in museum collections often appear to be "speaking" to those interested for the first time since leaving their makers' hands.

Objects and Meanings

From the time of the first contact between Native groups and Europeans in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, all manner of objects made and used by Aboriginal peoples in Canada have come into museum collections. Since the sixteenth century, such objects have been received as gifts, traded, commissioned, purchased, taken, and excavated. They have been displayed, first in Europe and then in North America, in a variety of different contexts – from curio cabinets in palaces to typological arrangements in natural history museums, and from historical and anthropological recontextualizations to "primitive art" displays.

Until recently, most studies and displays of Aboriginal material culture were unified in one important aspect – the intention to portray Aboriginal groups in as "pure" and "traditional" a state as possible. Descriptions of Aboriginal cultures were usually located in a mythic precontact past and objects chosen for exhibits were those perceived to show a minimum amount of European influence (Phillips 1998, xiii, 7). In this regard, objects created for the Northeastern tourist market – particularly the many varieties of innovative beadwork, quillwork and moosehair embroidery items developed by Aboriginal artists and entrepreneurs in the period from 1840 to 1920 – present a special problem (fig. 14). These pieces often incorporate an intriguing mix of Aboriginal and Western materials, manufacture techniques, and design motifs. Consequently, museums, collectors and even some Native people have tended to overlook their significance, denigrating them as commercial and inauthentic (Phillips 1998, 1999).

For example, while preparing this paper I came across a 1964 brochure that provided an overview of the Heye Foundation collection exhibited in the original Museum of the American Indian in New York City. In one photograph, a large wall case entitled "The Role of the Indian Woman" highlights a mannequin wearing a cotton dress adorned with silver brooches in a style reminiscent of Iroquois clothing worn in the 1860s. Draped over her shoulders is what appears to be an elaborately beaded cape, perhaps a ceremonial garment. However, on closer inspection I noted that this "cape" is actually an exceptional example of Iroquois souvenir art – a vibrantly

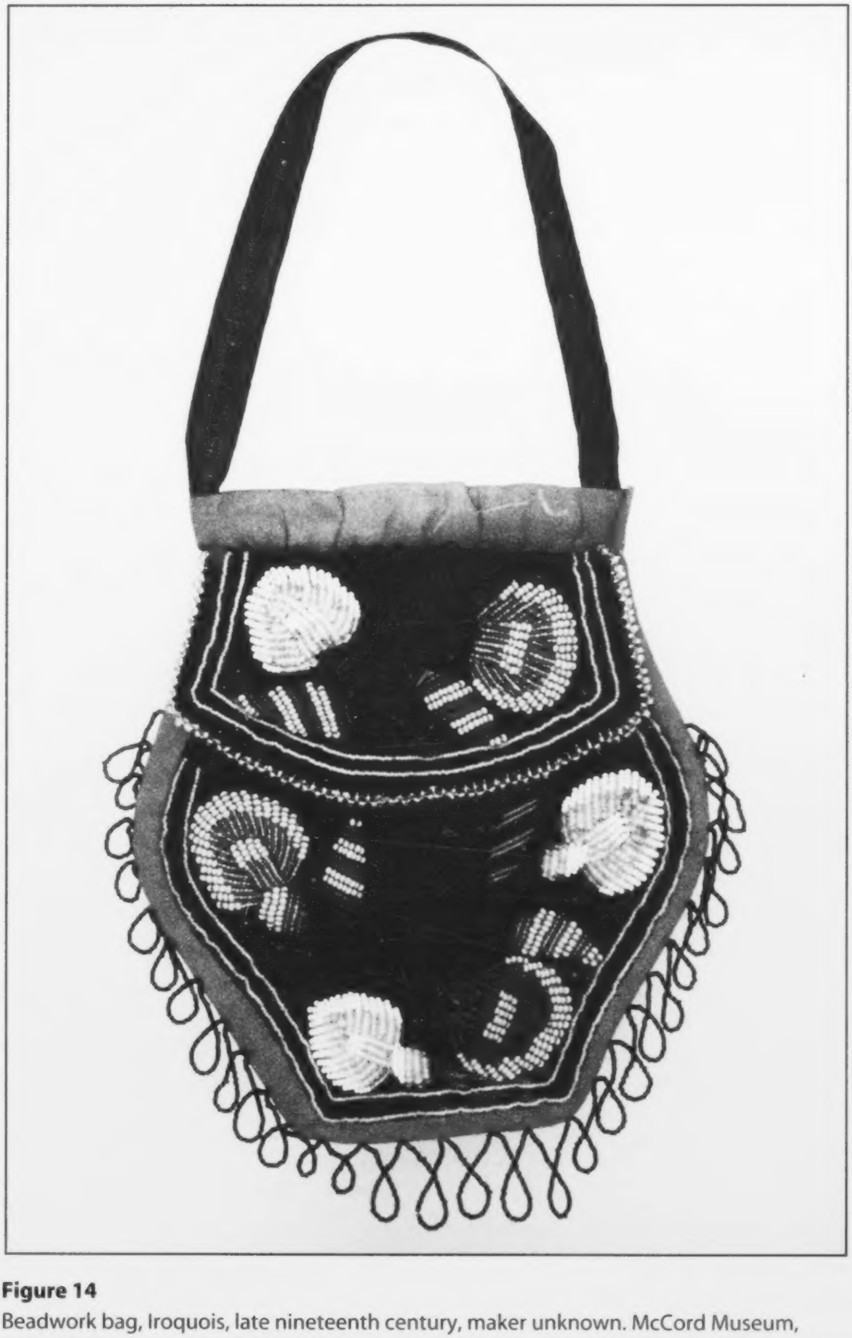

Figure 14
Beadwork bag, Iroquois, late nineteenth century, maker unknown. McCord Museum, Montréal. Photograph: McCord Museum.

beaded tablecloth made for sale by Tuscarora women around the turn of the century (Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation 1964).

A more recent example of the inability (or refusal) to recognize commodified beadwork can be cited. In the catalogue of an exhibition entitled "Indian Summer: The First Nations of North America" on display at the Musée royaux d'art et d'histoire in Brussels, the caption accompanying a photograph of a beaded Iroquois Glengarry cap reads, "The importance given to the bravery of warriors explains why these typically military accessories were adopted by First Nations. Although European soldiers were their enemies, Native warriors nevertheless recognized their courage and valour in battle" (Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire 1999, 179). However beaded Glengarry caps, modeled after the Scottish military equivalent, were actually a popular Victorian souvenir item made for sale by Iroquois beadworkers. In this instance, the commodified character of the object has been negated by the wish to portray this cap as an "authentic" item of Iroquois apparel designed to be worn into battle.

The issues of authenticity and commodification have complex underpinnings that must be considered when interpreting items of souvenir art (Appadurai 1986; Phillips 1998, 1999; Phillips and Steiner 1999; Root 1996; Spooner 1986). As Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher Steiner have pointed out, "a particularly dense aura of inauthenticity surrounds objects located at the intersection of the discourses of art, artifact, and commodity" (1999, 4). Moreover, they argue that the distinctions between the categories of art, artifact, and commodity are projections of individual experience that ultimately reveal more about those who collect objects than about those who make them (1999, 19). For example, in his seminal paper on the authenticity of oriental carpets, Spooner has established that "[carpets] have their own dynamic and historical continuity, and their relationship with any other cultural and social form is likely to be dialectical rather than unidirectional" (1986, 231).

In her work on hybridity and Northeastern souvenir art, Phillips has argued for the recognition of underlying continuity and agency in Aboriginal artistic traditions, even after the upheaval of many centuries of European contact. She contends that artists choices "were neither entirely dictated by the dominant culture nor were they blind and unmotivated. Rather … Aboriginal artists routinely elected to use images and forms that, while innovative, continued to 'make sense' within both indigenous and Euro-North-American signifying systems" (Phillips 1998, 20). Frank Ettawageshik, an Odawa whose family has run an art business in Little Traverse Bay, Michigan, for close to a century, strongly supports this contention. He explains that, "The production of art for the tourist market … is a reflection of cultural continuity and adaptation in the face of enormous pressures to relocate, assimilate, or otherwise fade away [and] is one of the leading indicators of a strong and sustained cultural existence" (Ettawageshik 1999, 29). Taking these factors into consideration, Phillips has proposed that all museums, including Native-run museums and art galleries, require new and fully post-colonial approaches that invite us to value souvenir arts "not for the residue they may be seen to contain of older and more 'authentic' traditions, but as objects that produce a new reality by successfully negotiating the challenge of the new and different" (Phillips 1998, 71).

A Case Study: "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life"

In the remaining portion of this paper, I will present a case study that illustrates how issues related to representation, authenticity, and collaboration were handled in a recent ethnographic exhibition. "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life" was organized and circulated by the McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montréal and the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University in New York State, in collaboration with the Kanien'kehaka Raotitohkwa Cultural Center, Kahnawake, the Tuscarora Nation community beadworkers within New York State, and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. The exhibit was on view at the McCord Museum from June 1999 to January 2000, and then at the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University from July to November 2000. In the Spring of 2001, "Across Borders" travelled to the Canadian Museum of Civilization, then on to the George Gustaf Heye Center of the National Museum of the American Indian, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Centre.

"Across Borders," the culmination of over five years of research and collaboration, tells a complex story of change, resilience, innovation, and survival. In many ways, it can be read as a critique of the "authenticity" paradigm that has dominated many museum representations of Aboriginal history. The exhibition traces the role that beadwork has played and continues to play in the lives of Iroquois people. In particular, "Across Borders" documents the development of a new, commodified style of beadwork that was created by the Iroquois in the mid nineteenth century, and continued to be made until after the Depression. The production and sale of beaded pincushions, wall pockets, moccasins, purses, picture frames, and other souvenir items became necessary due to the continuing economic losses sustained by the Iroquois throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The new beadwork styles achieved great popularity among Victorian tourists who wished to bring home travel souvenirs from "exotic places" such as Kahnawake (near Montréal) and Niagara Falls. Brightly coloured and elaborately decorated examples of Iroquois beadwork from the turn of the century can be found in museum collections around the world.

The Exhibition Process

Plans for an exhibition based on Iroquois beadwork had been taking shape slowly on different fronts among members of the curatorial team, but they crystallized rapidly after the curators got together in 1994 and planned a series of meetings. Ensuing discussions made it clear that what had begun as an exciting but straightforward exhibition describing continuity and innovation in an artistic tradition and "celebrating" the ongoing artistry of contemporary beadworkers would have to be reorganized and expanded. Specifically, the Iroquois curators insisted that the exhibition be grounded in community values. Jolene Rickard has expressed this view eloquently. "In my community there is a relationship between all the objects we create and the words that surround us. The words are here to teach and guide us through life: the objects are here to serve the memory and meaning of the word ... The dangling 'jitterbug' pins made from odd beads, like the elaborately beaded pillows, birds and pin cushions, are really messengers. What we create, tourist item or not, serves as a reminder of our spiritual, economic, and cultural survival" (1992, 108).

Moreover, in these early discussions Kanatakta shared with us his knowledge of the Mohawk community's participation in the late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century entertainment industry. Gradually, a vivid picture emerged of the role of beadworkers in creating flashy entertainment costumes and beaded souvenirs to sell at performances. Suddenly, the many unusual outfits we had seen in museum collections – outfits that in the past might have been identified as "inauthentic" due to their unusual design and garish beading – made sense in the context of staged performances for tourists. In fact, eventually we were able to match a number of unidentified items of apparel in museum collections with photographs of famous Mohawk entertainers and spokesmen.

Both Rickard and Kanatakta recommended that beadworkers and community consultants from Tuscarora and Kahnawake be involved in the exhibition from the onset – a proposal that was enthusiastically supported by all members of the curatorial team. This involvement took a number of forms. First, we organized museum visits for beadwork artists and others interested in the project, to examine collections of historic beadwork. A group from Kahnawake spent time at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and a group of Tuscarora beadworkers came to the Royal Ontario Museum (fig. 15).

We were struck by the tremendous interest shown by the beadworkers in the styles and technical construction of the historic pieces. The women spent hours tracing patterns, commenting on motifs and colour choices, and praising the level of skill evident on exceptionally executed objects. The curatorial team also set up video

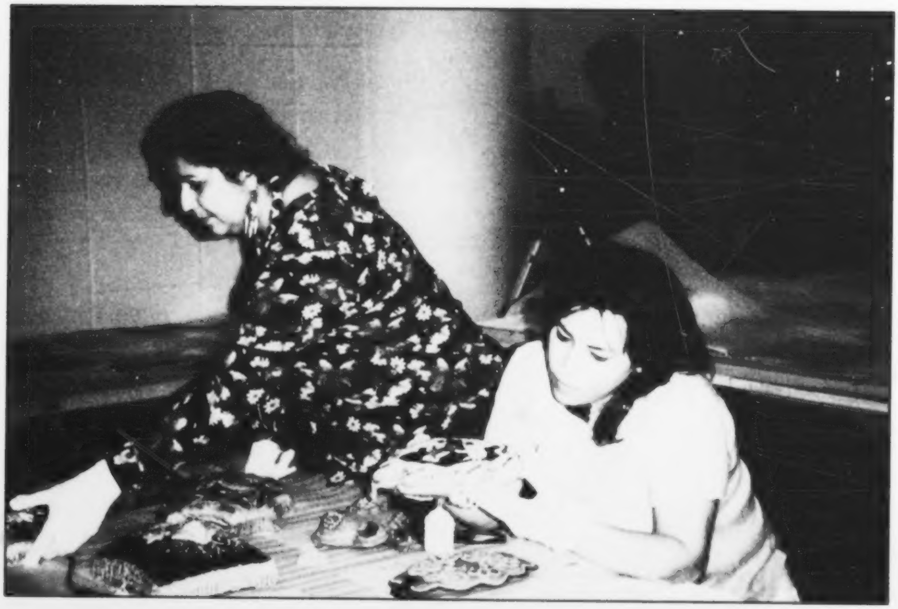

Figure 15
Beadworkers Majorie McComber and Robin Delaronde from Kahnawake examining the historic beadwork collection at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, 1997. Photograph: Judy Hall, Canadian Museum of Civilization.

interviews with beadworkers in the communities of Kahnawake and Tuscarora. These interviews supplied citations to used in the exhibition text and labels, and thus ensured that beadworker's voices would be heard throughout the exhibition. The videotapes and interview transcripts also became part of an archive of research materials that we hoped the exhibition would generate for new generations of beadwork artists.

These personal testimonies gathered from the beadworkers documented family memories of making and selling beadwork and the critical role that commodified beadwork played in ensuring the survival of their families and communities. Moreover, the beadworkers' frank and often humorous comments provided insights into the varied motivations and inspirations behind the creation of objects, and the integral role that beadwork plays in their everyday lives. Most important, by listening to beadworkers, we came to understand that the process of making beaded objects – the act of fabrication itself – was "intrinsically meaningful" (Gow 1995, 244). To create an exhibition that even attempted to explain the importance of beadwork in the lives of the Iroquois, we had to explore the spiritual, social, cultural, and economic significance of making beadwork.

We also agreed that the exhibition text should favour coherence and agreement over multivocality, regardless of the different ethnic origins and professional backgrounds of the curators. We hoped that the exhibition panels would reflect the team's efforts to arrive at a common understanding of the subject, informed by historical and material culture research, oral traditions, and the insights of contemporary beadworkers. Finally, the curators agreed that the design should not only enhance the striking visual beauty of the pieces, but also convey a strong sense of the contemporary significance of beadwork.

Not surprisingly, an exhibition process such as this can present distinct challenges. Although meetings of the curatorial team generally went smoothly, there were numerous disagreements and prolonged discussions. One particular difficulty was the predictable clash between curators' desires for extensive research and consultation and the realities of museum budgets and schedules. The exhibition process also stimulated discussion and debate both within the Iroquois communities and between these communities and the curatorial team. For example, our requests to borrow objects from a number of community-based Iroquois museums led to meetings between band councils and cultural centres; they were not always in agreement over whether or not to lend objects. In one case, our loan request, which was approved, also prompted the mounting of a community exhibit highlighting the objects selected for the "Across Borders" tour.

Our deliberations on the issue of whether or not to display wampum belts (important political documents made of tubular shell beads strung into wide "belts") went on for more than three years. These discussions are an excellent illustration of the complex life of an object and the manner in which its meaning can change over time. We drew on the knowledge and expertise of a number of Iroquois historians and elders. Although certain individuals and groups within Iroquois communities are opposed to the public display of wampum, our final decision, in collaboration with the Mohawk community of Kahnesatà:ke, was to include a well-documented belt from the collection of the McCord Museum. However, this decision will likely continue to spur debate as the exhibition travels to other venues.

Exhibition Themes

In keeping with our goal to develop a presentation style that would weave together the past, present, and future, we opted to divide the exhibition into six thematic areas rather than following a chronological narrative. In the "Introduction," visitors are greeted by large and vibrant images of Iroquois people today. This area features both historic and contemporary beadwork objects as well as a signed curatorial statement explaining the collaborative process that shaped the project. The next area – the "The Iroquois Universe" – is a circular, dome-shaped space that envelops visitors in a soundscape of the Thanksgiving Address (spoken in Mohawk and Tuscarora) and shelters them under a simulated mid-winter night sky. A small number of historic and contemporary beaded objects illustrate the antiquity and significance of iconography used in Iroquois beadwork made either for personal use or for the souvenir market.

The "Development of Beadwork" summarizes the historical context that shaped the story of beadwork. This area documents the transition from quills and other natural materials to glass beads, and explains the cosmological significance that glass beads held for Aboriginal people in the context of pre-contact use of translucent and reflective materials. This area also summarizes the events that led to the Iroquois strategy to make and sell souvenir beadwork. In the area titled "Creating" visitors meet contemporary beadwork artists through video, large colour photographs, and quotations from interviews (fig. 16). They learn about techniques, design inspiration, and stylistic developments – both turn-of-the-century and current. Examples of late nineteenth-century Iroquois commodified beadwork, such as Glengarry caps, pin-cushions, whiskbroom holders, and picture frames, are displayed alongside similar forms made by non-Aboriginal women, illustrating the process of exchange and innovation that led to novel yet familiar-looking souvenir beadwork forms (fig. 17).

"Marketing," the next area, portrays the economic dimension of beadwork and the entrepreneurial energy of the Iroquois. Displays include colourful entertainment outfits, historic photographs taken at important selling sites, such as Niagara Falls, and large numbers of beadwork objects created specifically for the souvenir trade. The final area, "Continuing," returns to the community to document the strong, ongoing link between beadwork and Iroquois cultural identity. Contemporary art installations by Shelley Niro (Mohawk) and Jeffrey Thomas (Onondaga) provide examples of the continuous re-invention of the language of beadwork.

Moving Beyond Historic Art or Aesthetic Culture

I would like to offer two observations drawn from the experience of serving as project director of "Across Borders." First, an exploration of the complex local meanings and histories of Iroquois beadwork objects led to a rapid dissolution of the borders comprising what Phillips and Steiner have called the "art-artifact-commodity triad" (1999, 16). It quickly became clear to the curatorial team that beadwork could only be interpreted and presented by considering the different contexts of production and use: cosmological, social, economic, etc. Ann Fienup-Riordan has described a

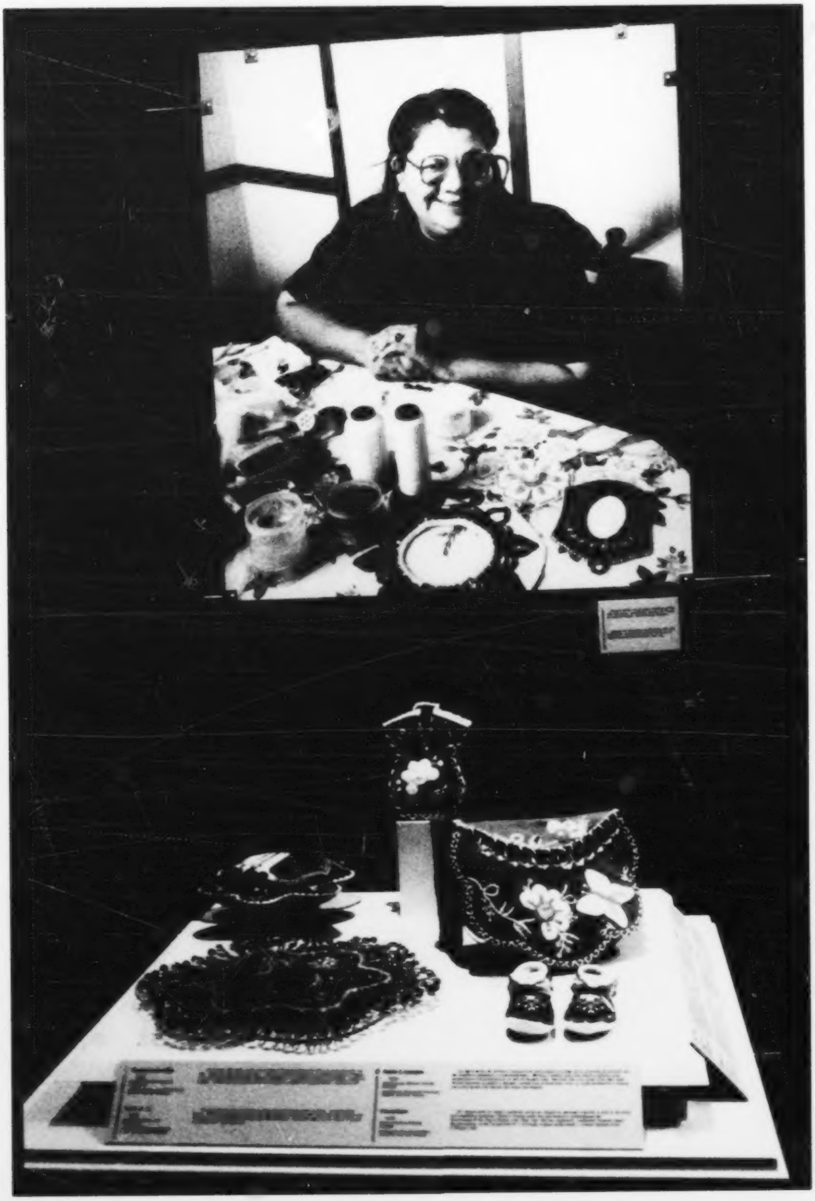

Figure 16

"Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life," McCord Museum, Montréal, 18 June 1999 – 9 January 2000. Installation photograph. View showing Rosemary Hill at her beadwork table in Tuscarora, 1998, and a showcase with contemporary beadwork. Photographer: Joseph Bergel. Photograph: McCord Museum.

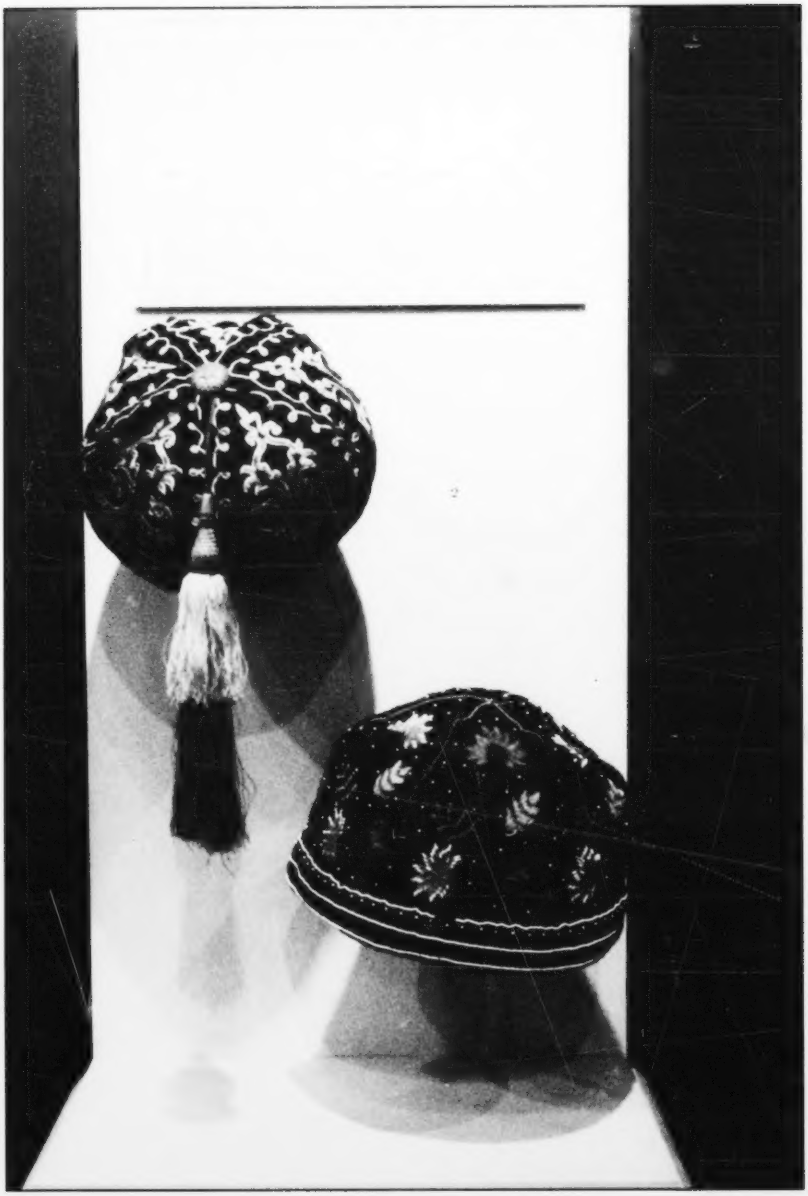

Figure 17

"Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life," McCord Museum, Montréal, 18 June 1999 – 9 January 2000. Installation photograph. View showing smoking caps made by a Euro-North American woman (left) and an Iroquois beadworker (right). Photograph: McCord Museum.

similar situation in an overview of the collaborative process that shaped an exhibition of Yu'pik Eskimo masks. She explains that the foundation of the exhibit was an attempt to see masks as a "way of making prayer" – a message that required the communication of meaning beyond art and artifact and across cultural boundaries (Fienup-Riordan 1999, 354).

My second observation is that the process of exploration that makes such "border crossing" possible is dependent on the willingness of institutions and curators to share, and at times even relinquish, power over the content of their exhibit space. This means, in effect, that the exhibition is turned into a "field site" of anthropological knowledge production (Dahl and Stade 2000, 165). Such projects require sufficient lead time and flexibility on the part of the museum management and the design team. Miriam Kahn (2000) has described just how complex and challenging collaborative projects that involve broad representation can become. In the case of "Across Borders" this collaborative approach appears to have succeeded. In the words of one reviewer, "Too many cooks will spoil the broth is often said, but sometimes the right combination of perseverance, sensitivity and consideration produces (or reveals) a rich layering of interests that couldn't come about any other way" (Miller 1999). A. Brian Deer, a Mohawk adviser for the wampum component, expressed appreciation that the complexity and local meaning of the beadwork story was presented. "As for the exhibit, I recommend it to everyone. It isn't just beadwork. The exhibit shows how beadwork formed part of the history of the Iroquois over the years, especially in Kahnawake and Tuscarora. The older pieces on display will bring back memories to many" (Deer 1999).

Discussions concerning the display and representation of Aboriginal cultures in art galleries tend to gravitate between two poles. Should objects be displayed because of their moral and social significance, or because of their perceived formal and timeless properties (Stafford 1994, 217–18). Sally Price (1989) presented an in-depth evaluation of this dualism, and the either/or situation that generally ensues. "Exhibits tend to present objects *either* as works of art (in which case it is standard to supply a 'dog collar' text, giving its owner's name and address) *or* as ethnographic artifacts (in which case the object's geographical origin, fabrication, function, and esoteric meaning are elucidated at length" (Price 1989, 83–4). Souvenir art does not fit comfortably in either category.

Do Canadian art galleries plan to display isolated "masterpieces" and interesting assemblages of Aboriginal "art" in much the same way such objects were exhibited centuries ago in curiosity cabinets? Are art galleries concerned that their exhibits will run the risk of representing Aboriginal culture and people as trapped in an irrelevant or romantic past? In the words of Aboriginal artist Joane Cardinal-Shubert, "As art that is viewed as primitive, we are dead art makers of a dead art" (1997, 128). A recent example of just such an approach is currently on view at the Louvre in Paris.

France. The new exhibition displays more than 100 objects from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Oceania accompanied by short wall texts and minimal labels. As described by a journalist, the exhibition "marks the first long-term display of what, in this bastion of Western art, has been referred to as 'primitive art.' And it's causing a stir … Some people have criticized the exhibit for being merely a political manoeuvre; others are skeptical that it truly will help the public understand African art" (Selby 2000).

On a different level, it is particularly significant that we are discussing this issue at a time when more and more history and anthropology museums are finally collaborating with Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal-run museums and cultural centres to conduct research, share knowledge and resources, and create beautiful, thought-provoking, and original exhibits. Moreover, within institutions (and funding agencies) there is an ongoing challenge to justify the time, resources, and level of curatorial control necessary to mount collaborative exhibits. Ethnographic museums have no lessons to teach art galleries, but as I have shown in the case study, recent exhibits demonstrate an attempt to move beyond old models.

Art galleries must rise to the challenge of developing new approaches that go beyond historicizing Aboriginal art or aestheticizing Aboriginal culture. To get an idea of how different these exhibitions might be, consider the comment made by Susan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne/Hodulgee Muscogee), a panelist at the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the Smithsonian's new Museum of the American Indian (slated to open in 2002). When asked what the new museum would actually do, she offered the daunting response that it would combine the Museum of Modern Art with the (Washington) Holocaust Museum and the Louvre (King 2000, 50).

Perhaps some recent exhibitions can help point the way. "Across Borders" combined historical research and local meanings to create a display that is as much about people and beliefs as it is about beautiful objects. On a different continent, Nicholas Thomas has applauded the innovative efforts of curators at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, Australia, "who have sought to transcend first one form of restrictiveness and then another … a recent presentation of fish traps, bags, mats, and other woven objects from the Northern Territory seemed to elicit both ethnographic and artistic ways of seeing – so easily and audaciously, in fact, that it became difficult to remember quite why the old antinomy was so powerful" (1996, 12). Clearly, the potential exists for Aboriginal objects of all types – a turn-of-the-century pincushion

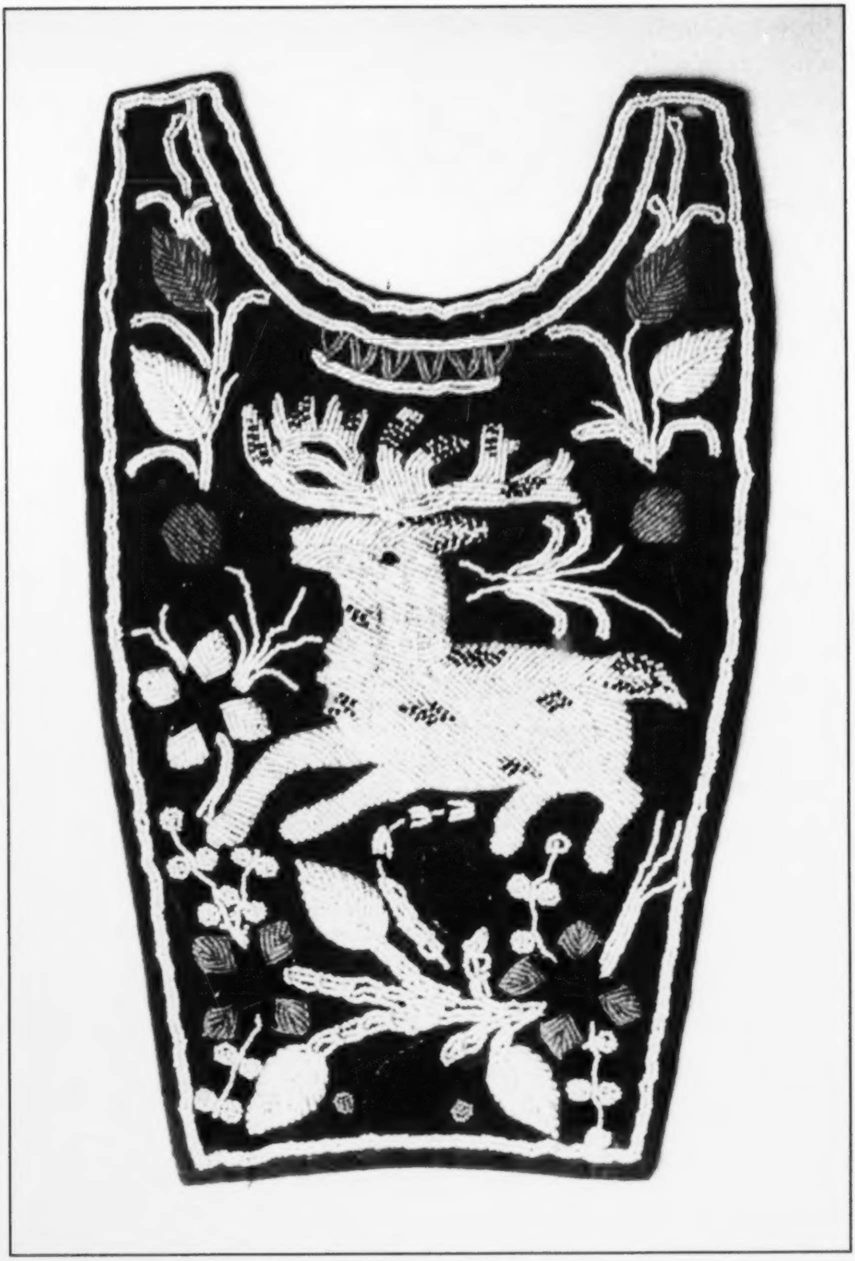

Figure 18

Beaded collar work with an entertainment outfit, Mohawk, late nineteenth century, maker unknown. Photograph: McCord Museum, Montréal.

decorated in glittering beads, a Barbie doll in a beaded outfit sold at last summer's pow wow, or an early nineteenth-century entertainment outfit – to convey profound realities that move beyond static depictions of the history and art of their makers (fig. 18).

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(Cultural) Objects of (Cultural) Value

Commodification and the Development of a Northwest Coast Artworld

Aaron Glass

A shotgun and the 1868 Indian Act riddled with bullet holes, mounted in a frame.

The first object in "Recollect," an exhibit of contemporary work from the collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG), contains items from Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's performance *An Indian Act Shooting the Indian Act* (1997). The text adjacent to the frame explains the performance and the identity of the objects. It seems important that this show begins with a First Nations artist working in a contemporary milieu, but what is the nature of this object? The gun and document are hardly a work of art; these objects are merely props – artifacts if you will. The "work" was the performative act, and the intention and concept behind it.

A woven spruce root hat with five rings on top, and a spruce root and wheat grass basket, each mounted on a plinth under Plexiglas.

These are among the last objects displayed in "Recollect." Small labels identify the artists (Primrose Adams and Isabel Rorick), materials, and dates (1990s), but provide no further information. It would seem that these Haida objects are meant to be viewed for their aesthetic features, free from contextualizing data – that is, to be viewed as art rather than artifact. Or perhaps they are meant to communicate with adjacent works by other artists. What they seem *not* to represent, however, are typical examples of First Nations manufacture; they are not utilitarian items, scientific specimens, or souvenir curios. Nor do they communicate *specific* cultural information (the rings on the hat signal chiefly rank) or personal information (the generational transmission of knowledge).

These two examples encapsulate the problematics of displaying First Nations objects in an art gallery setting. Each is "framed" as recognizable art, yet they are contextualized and explained (or not) very differently. They also raise a host of issues that have plagued curators and collectors for at least fifty years. Does the "Native" in Native art signify features of the object or the identity of its maker? What is the responsibility of civic institutions to their various communities – will they resort to tokenism to be inclusive? How are we to account for the problems of intention and authenticity that are implied by the standard distinctions between art, artifact, and tourist art. How are we to deal with the resultant issues of where and how to display the respective materials? All these questions address the slippage between producers and consumers as objects move through different communities and systems of value (see Phillips and Steiner 1999).

Assuming that objects have no innate meaning or intrinsic value, we must recognize how meanings and values are generated by the larger discursive and institutional contexts through which objects circulate. A number of authors suggest that a critical stance toward objects, a recognition of ideational values and conceptual content, and a community of knowing viewers – in other words, an "artworld" – is needed to constitute a work of art (Danto 1964, Becker 1982, Alsop 1982, Bourdieu 1993). Artworlds are complex social networks involved in the production, transformation, and maintenance of cultural and financial art values. Attention to the functioning of artworlds encourages us to historicize the application of the term "art" to the objects of other cultures, and to shift focus from static, individual objects to the movement of objects – often as commodities – through networks of social value (Appaduri 1986). A museum may acquire old objects once made for use (artifacts), old objects made for sale (tourist art), new objects made for use or sale in old styles (traditional art), or new objects made for participation in a current milieu (contemporary art), but all these types of art have been commodified at one time or another. When we explore the process of value creation and change, we not only challenge notions of authenticity as intrinsic to objects or their makers, but also complicate dichotomous assimilation or resistance narratives that simply dismiss or assert Native control over the exchange process (Phillips and Steiner 1999, Thomas 1991).

The purpose of this paper is threefold: to review various discourses that have contributed to the development of a Northwest Coast artworld; to examine the dynamics of commodification whereby indigenous objects of many types have circulated through this artworld, and to disclose some of the values adhering to those objects; and finally, to contextualize these discourses and values within larger artworld practices in order to better assess our current predicament and to suggest viable alternatives in the display of Northwest Coast objects. I have divided the review into three heuristic periods – tentatively labeled "colonial" (1850–1950), "modernist" (1950–1980), and "postmodernist" (1980–2000) – but I do not mean to imply strict temporal ruptures. This discussion, sketched in broad strokes, is admittedly filled with egregious generalizations as to First Nations and settler attitudes and actions, and these specific histories cry out to be recovered. Here my only hope is to provide a useful narrative for integrating some of the myriad stories. I draw particular attention to past exhibitions at the VAG (and other institutions) as representative, and indeed constitutive, of the various stages of artworld development.

Colonialism, Nationalism, and the Value of Resources: 1850–1950

The nineteenth century was a period of intense contact and mutual exchange, population growth and decline, increasing displacement, assimilation, and religious conversion. Despite clearly oppressive colonial policy, there was deep ideological ambivalence among settlers toward Native people – a tension between perception of the heathen and the noble savage. Belief in "primitiveness" took on different values that are reflected in the early discourses of Northwest Coast art.

One early form of cultural exchange took place in the late eighteenth century between maritime explorers and coastal First Nations. Sailors sought souvenirs, and Native people met the demand by trading or selling both old and new objects. But it is important to note that while masks and other regalia may have been sold, people retained claims to the privilege represented by the object: in this sense, masks were what Annette Weiner (1992) calls "inalienable possessions": things that could be given away while rights of ownership were retained. At this point at least, objects may have been seen as a renewable resource for Native communities as the value of those objects to Europeans became increasingly clear. By the late 1800s, both missionaries and ethnographers had begun collecting objects under the common assumption (and ethical or scientific justification) that indigenous cultures were vanishing; this process of collecting both furthered assimilation and increased the cultural and market value of increasingly scarce objects (Steiner 1994, 104). Because only old objects, free from the taint of European contacts and markets, were considered truly valuable, a cult of authenticity entered the evaluation of Native materials (see Errington 1999, 71). At the same time, some Native people, especially those converted to Christianity, may have increasingly taken advantage of the financial opportunity to sell objects that were now "useless."[1]

With increased assimilative pressure, museum collecting, government appropriation, and tourist activities came a rise in the commercialization of indigenous material and a growing non-Native interest in industrialization and welfare issues. As early as the 1920s, ethnographer Harlan Smith and missionary George Raley both suggested using indigenous images in mainstream design and manufacturing. By the 1940s, Alice Ravenhill (and the British Columbia Indian Arts and Welfare Society) and Mildred Valley Thornton (and the Labor Arts Guild) sought the support of major Vancouver institutions to promote recognition of Native art as a means of advancing the welfare of Native people.[2] Such activities culminated in the 1948 Conference on Native Indian Affairs, held at the University of British Columbia (UBC), where the value of First Nations art was repeatedly emphasized as a provincial heritage, a viable industry for Native peoples, and a tourist attraction (see Hawker 1998).

The conflation of the categories of art, artifact, curio, and industrial or cultural resource had a precedent in the displays of indigenous materials at world's fairs, where the additional value of Native imagery for nationalist symbolizing became a dominant theme.[3] At the same time, Northwest Coast imagery was also valued by Canadian artists during a period of rampant nationalism. In the mid-1920s, an extensive project was coordinated by the Canadian National Railway, with the assistance of Marius Barbeau and Harlan Smith of the Victoria Memorial Museum, to relocate and paint Skeena River totem poles so they would be visible from the new transcontinental trains (see Cole 1985, 270–77; Hawker 1998, chap. 3). Barbeau took a number of artists to document the poles, and these artists – along with Emily Carr and some members of the nationalist Group of Seven – were included in a landmark 1927 "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern" held at the National Gallery to celebrate Canada's Diamond Jubilee (see Morrison 1991). This exhibit validated Native objects as a vital aspect of Canadian heritage and as an inspiration for important, contemporary artists.[4]

The "colonial" period was characterized by the treatment of First Nations objects as a resource amenable to appropriation and revaluation: as a financial and cultural resource (for Native communities accommodating to and resisting assimilation); as a commercial resource (for the growing tourist economy); as a moral resource (for missionaries to remove and then display as a symbol of successful conversion); as a scientific resource (for ethnographers to study non-Western cultures); as an artistic resource (for non-Native artists seeking inspiration); as a political resource (to define unique regional or national identities). The year 1950 marked an important turning point. The newly-opened UBC Museum of Anthropology hired Mungo Martin, a senior Kwakwaka'wakw carver, who became a central figure in the so-called "renaissance" of Native art and culture. R. B. Inverarity published *Art of the Northwest Coast Indians*. The ban on the potlatch was dropped, and repatriation requests commenced. The Massey Report[5] was released, expanding government support to Canadian cultural initiatives. Vancouver was declared "Totemland." The result of all this was that Northwest Coast objects and images were more visible than ever, but advocates and Natives alike agreed that indigenous objects were not held in high enough regard.

Modernism, Universalism, and the Value of Aesthetics: 1950–1980

North American society after 1950 was characterized by increasing patronage for the arts and an expanding market, by the institutionalization of the artworld, by a rhetoric of decolonization and an increase in Native political visibility, and by challenges to the progressive rhetoric of modernity which vastly expanded the definition of "art" while celebrating the art of "others." Museums engaged the discourses of modern art (purity of form, increasing abstraction, philosophical intentions), while promoting interest in "primitive art." The tensions that arose in the course of this dialogue continue to impact the evaluation of Native material.

Some Significant Tensions

As Western society became increasingly industrialized, artists and aesthetes turned to Native cultures as an antidote to twentieth-century alienation. The value of the primitive – signaled by objects of spiritual or ritual use, hand-made by people in ecological harmony with nature – was a romantic vestige of the same conceptual opposition that saw indigenous people as fundamentally different: pre-rational, pre-capitalist, prehistoric. Miller (1991) even argues that the oppositional concept of "primitive" was essential to the construction of modern art's progressive rhetoric. At the same time, such "other" creations could be apprehensible by a universal modernist aesthetic through purity of form. The belief in universal appreciation validated both the appropriation, decontextualization, and revaluation of indigenous materials, and their transference from villages to metropolitan museums (see Clifford 1988, Price 1989, Hoffman 1993a).

While this tension between difference and universality was being played out in theory, museums and funding agencies had to contend with the more practical question of whether to accept and support Native art that preserved traditional values or Native art that accommodated progressive market forces. The totem pole preservation projects initiated by UBC in 1949 and by the British Columbia Provincial Museum (BCPM) in 1952 set academic precedents for the re-creation of older styles using existing ethnographic collections as models. These programs, directed by welfare-minded anthropologists (Harry and Audrey Hawthorn at UBC, Wilson Duff at the BCPM), were efforts to salvage authentic information, revive traditional arts, and provide economic opportunities for Native carvers. Such efforts, along with increasing Native political mobilization, resulted in the 1976 creation of the British Columbia Indian Arts and Crafts Society as a means to better regulate the commercialization of Native objects. It is a colonial irony that assimilation policy and theories of cultural change enforced the inevitability of progress at the same time as academics and the general public retained a fetish for the authentically traditional Native object while rejecting commercialized versions (Phillips and Steiner 1999, 10). Here the commodification of the (rare, expensive) antique runs counter to the commodification of the (mass-produced, affordable) tourist piece, entangled though they were in the same larger market network of knowledge and appreciation.

The mobilization of Native imagery for regionalist and nationalist symbolizing continued after 1950, but Native communities increasingly accessed public funds for local projects tied to political identity. A series of British Columbia centennial celebrations in 1958, 1967, and 1971 were met with patriotic displays of old and new Native objects.[6] At the same time, the Gitksan of Gitanyow (Kitwancool) agreed to the removal and replication of a number of poles by the British Columbia Provincial Museum on the condition that Wilson Duff (1959) prepare a publication outlining lineage histories and territories for use in their land claims negotiations. Kwakwa̱ka̱’wakw in Alert Bay used Centennial funds to erect a new Bighouse in 1965 in order to increase tourist attention, revive local carving, and revitalize ceremonialism. By 1970, K’san village – including a museum, interpretation centre, and the Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art – was opened with government support (a result of Massey Report recommendations). By the late 1970s, new totem poles were being erected in many coastal villages – emphatic statements of cultural identity, political presence, and the failure of total assimilation.

The Art Discourse

The most dramatic discursive shift surrounding Native objects during this period was the insistence by museums, galleries, and "experts" that such material be seen as fine art. Michael Ames (1992, 59–69) discusses the ways in which museum anthropologists at this time helped to fabricate the artworld both by defining the parameters of meaning and authenticity while reinforcing those values through patronage, and by legitimizing and promoting them through exhibition and publication. In general, objects were removed from the contextualized displays of ethnography museums and isolated for their aesthetic features and drama; the validation of them as fine art was accompanied by dramatic increases in market prices.

The first major exhibit to suggest such a revaluation was "People of the Potlatch: Native Arts and Culture of the Pacific Northwest Coast," held at the VAG in 1956 and curated by J.A. Morris and Audrey Hawthorn. Though the exhibit and catalogue were framed predominantly in anthropological terms,[7] they introduced a language of high quality art forms that was further signaled by the venue itself. The objects in the show were considered to have a high degree of aesthetic value. The *Vancouver Province* (16 March 1956) declared that the "objects were no longer regarded solely as fantastic primitive creations, but esteemed for their high artistic qualities." The *Vancouver Sun* (13 April 1956) compared the material to modern, abstract art. Erna Gunther's influential *Art in the Life of the Northwest Coast Indians*, a catalogue of a collection held by the Portland Art Museum, published in 1966, similarly fused a fine arts appreciation with relevant contextualizing information.

The turning point in the discourse (if not the practice) came in 1967 with the centennial VAG exhibit "Arts of the Raven: Masterworks by the Northwest Coast Indian" curated by Doris Shadbolt with Wilson Duff, Bill Holm, and Bill Reid. The catalogue proudly announced – in what would become a standard refrain for future texts – "this is an exhibition of art, high art, not ethnology. It proposes to bring together many of the masterworks of this art, to show the wide range and aesthetic excellence of its forms, and to explicate and establish its claim to greatness." Although the show did include contextualizing essays, interpretive material, and a display of Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw masks in flickering firelight set to the sound of ritual singing (which I call ethnology, and primitivism!), it employed various strategies to encourage a fine-art reading (including reiteration in the text and media of this agenda).[8] Surely indigenous meanings were lost and contemporary Native politics overlooked (see Marcia Crosby 1994), but the goal of the organizers was explicit: to shift evaluation of Native objects from ethnographic artifacts or tourist curios to fine art. The success of their vision is evidenced by the fact that in 1976 three ethnographic institutions (the new UBC Museum of Anthropology, the new British Columbia Provincial Museum, and the Canadian Museum of Civilization) mounted revised displays of Northwest Coast material using dramatic, fine-art approaches.

Along with institutional support came the establishment of a Northwest Coast art history. Danto (1964), Becker (1982, 131–2), and Alsop (1982, 122) argue that a historical understanding of development and a clear theory of aesthetics provide the ideational basis for taking any "art" status for granted, and for establishing formal conventions and rules of authenticity. Although Boas (1928) outlined coastal design in his *Primitive Art*, Bill Holm's landmark 1965 book, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form*, was the first clear account of the stylistic principles underlying coastal forms. Holm would carry the art discourse further with his work on individual artists such as Charles Edenshaw and Willie Seaweed, focusing on innovation and historical development. Holm's mantle was picked up by other art historians. One of these, Peter Macnair, was a co-curator of the important exhibit "The Legacy" (1971 and 1977), a show that elaborated on the development of Northwest Coast art over time, articulated traditional styles, tracked changes among individuals and groups, and emphasized contemporary innovation. During these years Wilson Duff was also applying contemporary theory to posit philosophical interpretations of coastal forms. His main tools – structuralism and psychoanalysis – coincided with the modernist belief that the complexity of other cultural patterns could be apprehended by a universally structured critical mind. Duff's VAG exhibition "Images, Stone, B.C." (1975) treated archaeological material as sculpture and inquired into its "way of seeing" and "way of thinking." In other words, the exhibition treated Native objects as vehicles for ideational communication. In 1979, Hilary Stewart published *Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast*, the first best-selling popular manual for deciphering the forms and meaning of increasingly visible objects and images. This group of scholars – Holm and Macnair (art history), Duff (interpretation), and Stewart (popular appeal) – effectively generated "Northwest Coast Indian Art" and the ideational basis for this term.

The Artists

The increasing visibility of individual Natives was another important factor in the growth of the artworld. The celebration of the individual artist-as-genius is a vital component of the modernist myth of art (Hoffman 1993a, 170), and the popularity of living carvers helped to legitimize the revaluation of (dead) artifacts into (contemporary) art. By the mid-1940s, Ellen Neel had moved to Vancouver and set up public carving sheds and shops in which she sold model totem poles and other crafts made in the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw style developed by her grandfather Charlie James (see Nuytten 1982), but it was her uncle, Mungo Martin, who captured the imagination of the museum world and the public alike. In 1949 Martin came to UBC to work on the restoration of old totem poles, and for the next three years he carved new poles and other objects and recorded vast amounts of ethnographic information.[9] In 1952 he was hired to initiate a carving program at the British Columbia Provincial Museum in Victoria where he replicated old poles and created new ones. He also trained Henry and Tony Hunt (who took over the museum position when he died in 1962). Martin was celebrated by Audrey and Harry Hawthorn and Wilson Duff (and the media) as being the last great totem carver, the bridge to present generations, and a vast storehouse of traditional knowledge. He was also credited with initiating the so-called "renaissance" of Northwest Coast art between the years of 1955 and 1970. This one man was held to embody both the primitive and the modern, the chief and the artist, the traditional and the progressive.

At the same time, Bill Reid was making a name for himself with jewelry based on old Haida designs found in museums and books. He was already known as a CBC broadcaster, and he had participated in important salvage efforts, carving projects, and exhibitions.[10] But it was only after his 1974 solo exhibit at the VAG that the "renaissance" discourse shifted from Martin to Reid, where it would remain unchallenged for twenty years. That exhibit sealed his persona as a great contemporary artist, albeit one rooted in an ancient tradition, and finally validated Northwest Coast art as a contemporary medium. While it was not as dramatic or popular as "Arts of the Raven," Reid's exhibit was truly the first show to remove cultural context from work held out to a pure, modernist aesthetic gaze. Moreover, it was only with

Reid's work in jewelry, precious metals, and large public commissions towards the late 1970s that Northwest Coast art began to command fine-art prices.

The Market and Patronage

The process of commodification involves desire, taste, demand, production, availability of objects, distribution, consumption, and knowledge; it is characterized by negotiation of social, economic, political, and cultural values. Fine art (especially during high modernism) was held to be philosophically pure, and free from the profanities of the exchange economy. The irony is that it is this assumption of cultural purity that grants art its uniquely high market value. Add to this the domestication of indigenous arts and we collapse the categories of art, artifact, and commodity, even though market values rely on their relatively clear separation (see Phillips and Steiner 1999, 16). Perhaps Holm and Reid's *Indian Art of the Northwest Coast: A Dialogue on Craftsmanship and Aesthetics* (1976) best typifies the emerging trend toward connoisseurship. The retail market reflected the shift from curio to collectible as a number of new galleries supplemented the craft stores in Vancouver and Victoria after 1968, perhaps stimulated by the success of "Arts of the Raven" (see Duffek 1983, 302-5).[11] By the 1970s, the demand for affordable multiples dominated the artworld in general, and the local industry in Northwest Coast prints was booming.

This period was further characterized by expanding patronage for Northwest Coast art. In 1957, the federal government, acting on recommendations in the 1951 Massey Report, created the Canada Council. The Council, along with provincial initiatives, provided financial support for major Native arts projects in both metropolitan centres and remote reserves. The greatest support came from institutions, especially the UBC Museum of Anthropology, the British Columbia Provincial Museum, the Vancouver Centennial Museum, the Vancouver Art Gallery, and the University of Washington through the organization of carving programs, commissions, exhibitions, and publications, not to mention gift shop sales. In addition, private industry and private individuals supported major projects, and as early as 1958 forestry companies took the lead in corporate philanthropy – a public relation coup for companies often battling with First Nations behind the scenes for control of resources. First Nations organizations and communities also increasingly acted as patrons and supporters for new artists. In 1977 Native artists established the Northwest Coast Indian Arts Guild to regulate quality and control commercialization. Moreover, with the return of potlatches and ceremonialism came requirements for new regalia.

Summary and Critique

Between 1950 and 1980, the elaboration of a Northwest Coast artworld based on the principles of universal, modernist aesthetics relied on the coordination of object production and consumption, intellectual evaluation, political, institutional and financial support, and market expansion. "Arts of the Raven" marked a turning point in the articulation of aesthetics, politics, academia, and finance; local newspapers even ran announcements in their shopping columns: "Art gallery shop has Indian gifts" (*Vancouver Sun*, 3 August 1967) and "You can buy arts of the Raven, too" (*Vancouver Province*, 1 August 1976). The entanglement of all these factors is suggested by the fact that many exhibits (especially early print and solo-shows, two hallmarks of contemporary art) were organized by retail outlets (see Duffek 1983a, 298–300; Ames 1992, 63). The "renaissance" discourse often applied to Northwest Coast art and culture during this period has been contested on at least two counts: first, that the rebirth metaphor cannot apply to cultures that never actually died (Crosby 1991); and second, that the intrusion of non-Native forces and interests indicate a different social context for the newly-created objects (Reid 1993). Yet if we identify this latter process with the emergence of a Northwest Coast artworld in which First Nations were intimately involved in various capacities, then a comparison to the Renaissance Florence of the Medicis seems reasonable in at least the following ways: the importance of private and civic patronage; the development of collective artist studios and the practice of apprenticeship; the emergence of art history and the resultant cult of antiquity/authenticity; the rise of market values; the role of critics, theorists, aesthetes and experts; the importance of "museums" and cultural institutions; and finally the recognized value of collections to national or regional heritage. I venture to say that at the end of this period, Bill Reid's sculpture "Raven and the First Men" (1980) marked the successful integration of all of these factors and thus became a litmus test for a truly contemporary indigenous fine art.

Yet by this time, larger social and artistic discourses were shifting and a general critique of the universal modernist aesthetic was gaining currency. With the establishment of multiculturalism in 1971, there was a policy shift from earlier assimilation to post-colonial pluralism, and a recognition that First Nations constituted an integral aspect of *living* Canadian culture. This led to an emphasis on ethnic identity and a reaffirmation of cultural specificity and context in the representation of Native objects; even Doris Shadbolt (1983, 369), an established formalist, announced that "the modernist attitude [of] formal analysis as an approach is out of date," and advocated a more open acceptance of development and innovation in contemporary work. This shift encouraged a new tension (for both producers and consumers) between romantic primitivism, with its desire for authentic tradition, and avant-garde expressions of contemporary ethnic identity (Duffek 1983b, 315–6). The old battle – between aesthetics and content, between art and artifact – which was declared won by "Arts of the Raven" organizers, kept rearing its ugly head. As an example of the unresolved and ambiguous status of First Nations objects in the age of modernism, Hilary Stewart (1979b, 69) describes how Robert Davidson released a 1973 print appropriately titled "Abstract" to very poor sales; he renamed it "Killer Whale Fin," raised the price, and sold the entire run. He had learned his lesson and would rise to stardom in the new age of postmodern ethnicity.

Postmodernism, Pluralism, and the Value of Ethnicity: 1980–2000

Since the 1980s, the myth of modernism as a universal, progressive theory has been increasingly replaced by a philosophical fracturing based on deconstruction and endlessly imbedded representation. This period has been marked by the rapid expansion of global capitalism and an opposing mobilization of regional cultural inflection that often results in experiences and expressions of hybridity and fragmentation (see Hoffman 1993b). Social theory is now characterized by a de-essentialized culture concept, by a notion that culture is only a fluctuating set of strategic identities, performances, representations. The larger artworld has been characterized by theory-driven, text-based, conceptual art, by performance art, by video and new media, and by explicit statements and questionings of identity. The generalized primitive art of modernist universalism has given way to specific ethnic arts of postmodern pluralism (see Graburn 1993a). Increasingly, Native artists are breaking away from past institutionalization while negotiating their personal and cultural identities in the complex and often contradictory intersections of self, global markets, public expectations, and community responsibilities (DeMott and Milburn 1989).

The Return of Culture

Despite earnest attempts among past curators to vanquish the ethnographic from the art gallery, over the last twenty years we have witnessed the dramatic return of culture in many guises. Authenticity in Native art is now usually considered more a value of the maker's identity than anything intrinsic to the object. With the return of ceremonialism, objects made for use within communities are legitimized in a new "traditional" context: masks that have been danced also fetch higher prices. Another aspect of this shift is the return of ceremonial regalia confiscated during the Potlatch prohibition. The Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw communities of Alert Bay and Cape Mudge now host museums and cultural centres in which they recontextualize and reappropriate the objects that were taken from them in 1921; these objects are much more than mere "art" – they represent specific family privileges, the cultural heritage of the community, and a political redress for colonial persecution.

An increasing number of artists navigate between museum-sponsored carving programs, private and corporate commissions, the retail market for high-end "tourist art," serious collectors and museums, public relations opportunities, and ceremonial participation in their communities (see Hunt 1983, 266). Community participation has increasingly become a major criterion for valuing indigenous artists and their work. Bill Reid came to be criticized for his lack of participation in Haida village life and politics. In contrast, Robert Davidson made a name for himself in this ceremonial space in the 1980s when he learned to sing and dance, and hosted potlatches and feasts on reserves and in the city. Davidson's major 1993 VAG retrospective, "Eagle of the Dawn," was a celebration of his involvement with Haida culture as much as his innovative designs and remarkable craftsmanship. Objects in the art gallery setting still lacked specific cultural interpretations, but there was a growing emphasis on the larger cultural context of community participation. It was with Robert Davidson that the popular "renaissance" discourse began to be applied to culture as well as to art (Kowinski 1995).

Expansion of Form and Market

Since the 1980s there has been a rapid expansion of format and media in Northwest Coast work accompanied by a parallel diversification of the market. In Vancouver, multiple retail spaces are aimed at various price ranges and demands for information. In addition to work made for retail, a number of large public commissions have radically increased the visibility of Northwest Coast fine art.[12] Whereas earlier totem parks were designed either to preserve and advertise regional heritage (Stanley Park) or to provide an opportunity for ethnographic reproduction (UBC Haida Village and BCPM Thunderbird Park), these new displays function as named pieces of contemporary fine art and, increasingly, as political statements of First Nations identity (although they still may also serve similar touristic functions).

The explosion of print media has also increased visibility, marketability and collectibility of Native art, and this development encapsulates the tourist art to cultural artifact to fine art shift in artworld discourse. While some artists (Ellen Neel, Henry Speck, Doug Cranmer, Tony Hunt) began experimenting in the 1950s and 1960s, it was not until the 1970s and 1980s that Robert Davidson, Bill Reid, Joe David, Roy Vickers, and others began to saturate the market with (then) affordable multiples (Duffek 1983a, 68). Prints are portable (making them eminently collectible) and frame-able (making them eminently "art"). But with this new, almost purely market-driven media came a surge of controversy as to its status and value. Some commentators felt that this openly commoditized Native art lacked formal interest, cultural authenticity, and spiritual integrity (all long associated with the value of indigenous art).[13] Others maintained that it was time to free Native artists from the shackles of traditional form and ethnographic content/context, and to allow them to enter the mainstream artworld under new criteria.[14] Both of these responses defend the integrity of "Native art" as it relates to prints, but the first continues to fetishize the romance of traditional culture (at the expense of modernity) while the second prioritizes contemporary values, methods, and messages (at the expense of ethnicity). Moreover, both ignore the role of new media as expressions of shifting Native identity, as well as the fact that prints are now being used as gifts in ceremonial contexts (after which they increase in value for collectors).

As in the larger artworld, postmodernism has entered the discourse of Native art, albeit in a delayed fashion. Mungo Martin and Bill Reid were celebrated for bridging the gap between Native and non-Native culture, but the conservative nature of their work was largely responsible for their public success in the artifact-to-art shift. By the 1980s, artists were more clearly expressing their "hybrid" status, and the public was becoming more receptive. Artists such as Wayne Alfred and Roy Vickers explicitly fused Northwest Coast and Christian imagery. Work with overt political themes also emerged; examples include Lyle Wilson's 1980 print *Ode to Billy Holm ... Lalooska ... Duane Pasco .... & Jonathon Livingston Seagull* (four non-Natives producing Northwest Coast style work), and David Neel's series of masks dealing with contemporary issues such as residential schooling, nuclear arms, and the "(in)justice" system.

Whereas many First Nations artists from elsewhere in Canada are working in contemporary, mainstream art genres such as painting, collage, photography, film and video, installation, and performance art, few Northwest Coast artists have embraced these media. This may be due to the fame and previous value attached to "traditional" work from the area. The most notable exception is Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, the only Northwest Coast artist mentioned in many surveys of "post-modern" Native art (Hoffman 1993b). Trained at art school, Yuxweluptun took up easel painting, appropriating both northern coastal designs and surrealist landscapes to create brightly colored scenes of environmental destruction, colonial oppression, and Native stereotypes. His work certainly functions alongside other postmodern expressions of identity through its linking of local and global politics.

New (?) Exhibit Paradigms

Over the past twenty years we have seen an expansion of forms, a renewed emphasis on cultural identity, a proliferation of both artists and galleries, further diversification of the art market, increasing career control by artists and Native communities, and a political context of repatriation. How is the art gallery to respond to these changes? One approach is to provide historical juxtapositions suggesting various engagements of Native and non-Native art over time. The 1986 Museum of Anthropology exhibition "Jack Shadbolt and the Coastal Indian Image" is an example of this approach. This show, which paired Shadbolt's modern expressionist paintings with the masks and regalia that inspired them, suggested specific relationships of appreciation within a complicated history of appropriation. However, in contrast to the famous 1984 MOMA exhibit, "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern," the Shadbolt show avoided any discussion of modernist affinities. In 1996 the VAG presented a similar exhibit combining Emily Carr landscapes and totem-scapes with the surrealistic landscapes of Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun. Here Yuxweluptun's postmodern strategies of borrowing and irony both continue and critique the legacies of British Columbia landscape painting (and land policy) and Native appreciation (and appropriation).

A second historical strategy is that of the survey: including Native art not necessarily because of thematic overlap (although it may occur) but rather because of contemporaneity. The 1996 VAG exhibit "Topographies: Aspects of Recent B.C. Art" presented forty-one artists; the work of sixteen First Nations artists in the show ranged from baskets, blankets and masks to paintings and sculpture. Three curators were involved in selecting work, but only Doreen Jensen, the Native curator, included what would be considered craft items in the standard dichotomies; the clear message conveyed through her catalogue essay and the artist statements was that there are values and meanings involved in Native objects other than those appreciated by the existing artworld. It seems that the VAG agreed, because they purchased works of many of the "Topographies" artists, including Isabel Rorick's baskets (which were recently displayed in "Recollect").

Another display strategy has been to present objects from the "Native point of view," encouraging indigenous artists to comment upon work beyond mere artist statements. For "Through My Eyes" (1998), an exhibit at the Vancouver Museum, a number of Native artists and public figures were invited to select and discuss objects from the collection. Responses ranged from aesthetic and technical praise, to reattribution, to the telling of specific stories associated with an item or its maker, to discussions of cultural practice, and to critical comments on museum storage techniques. The exhibit provided many insights and revealed many alternative "kinds of knowing" (Townsend-Gault 1992), challenging the notion that First Nations objects could only be viewed through the lens of the art/artifact dichotomy. A related and increasingly common practice is to involve First Nations curators. "Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch," organized in 1991 by the American Museum of Natural History, is a good example of a more traditional "ethnographic" exhibit, in that it explained the meaning and use of individual pieces within a larger cultural and historical context, but it also included contemporary voices and objects, largely through the participation of a Kwakwaka'wakw co-curator and a host of Native advisors. It proved that Native voices could be integrated with curatorial ones, and that objects did not lose their aesthetic power when displayed with interpretive or contextualizing material.

The most ambitious Vancouver exhibition of Native material, "Down From the Shimmering Sky: Masks of the Northwest Coast," held at the VAG in 1998, combined several of the strategies previously mentioned. This show was organized by an art gallery curator, an anthropologist/art historian, and a Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw chief. It centred around (somewhat generalized) indigenous cosmology and it juxtaposed older masks with contemporary ones. The major advancements were in the realm of programming: the VAG invited Native participants to perform songs, dances, and blessing ceremonies in the galleries. Yet more than anything else, "Down From the Shimmering Sky" proved to be an updated version of modernist display techniques which often isolate individual objects in space and provide little contextualizing information.[15] The curators were admittedly working under the requirements of the VAG, which apparently insisted on maintaining a clear distinction between art galleries and ethnographic museums. Curator Peter Macnair recounts how he overcame gallery opposition to mounting a set of masks at the angles they would be seen when used – "too anthropological" he was told; but when he called the display an "installation," it was allowed. At a private showing of the exhibit, Macnair explained recent historical research, details of Native use, and the logic behind object placement, but none of this information was made available to viewers on the grounds that it would be distracting.[16] The result was a dramatic display of beautiful masks (as befits a summer blockbuster) advancing neither orthodox curation nor a discourse surrounding Native objects. Masks are "easy" in that they represent the prototype of "primitive art" – recognizable wooden images made for ritualistic use and relating to chiefly rank (Errington 1999, 88, 97). People will come to see masks for a variety of reasons (including romantic aesthetic primitivism), and shows such as this one have the potential to provide a great educational opportunity.[17]

I would like to briefly examine several slippages that occurred in "Down From the Shimmering Sky" in order to suggest possible alternatives. Despite a curator's catalogue statement that, "to celebrate the object only for its aesthetic is to create an icon bereft of meaning" (Macnair 1998, 36), this was in fact the display strategy employed. There were attempts to introduce cultural contexts and meanings, but to me, they were somewhat confusing and potentially misleading. The show was organized around the human face plus four realms of the cosmos (Spirit, Mortal, Sky, and Undersea) – a schematic generalization of many different First Nations beliefs. However, the large statements on the wall were all drawn from Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw ceremonial (the Native co-curator was from these communities), and the bias of objects and information was dramatically weighted toward the Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw, despite a pronouncement that the show was a "comprehensive overview" (Bogusky

1998, 7). The most interesting and problematic display was the final room, in which a Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw Humsumlth (or "cannibal bird") mask lay on a plinth wrapped in a blanket, accompanied by a statement that in traditional communities, these masks are never shown outside of the potlatch because they are too powerful and dangerous. This is vital information about local meanings, but how is the viewer to understand a message that "one should not look upon these masks" at the end of an extensive display of them? Such a statement placed at the beginning could have introduced issues of tradition and commercialization, compromise and collaboration between museums and communities, and the necessity of cross-cultural translation. Instead, the most loaded image in the show (aesthetically, culturally, and politically) provided a mere transition into the gift shop.

Speaking of commerce, another significant slippage existed between the stated curatorial and historical content and a subtext of indigenous meanings. To the curators' credit, great efforts were made (both in the limited wall text and in the catalogue) to emphasize the fact that many of the masks were made for the (old) tourist trade or the (new) fine art market, and old and new masks were displayed side by side to emphasize continuity as well as innovation. However, a number of factors suggested the "sacred" nature of the objects, a layer of meaning not commensurate with the commercial nature of many masks. For one thing, the only contemporary carvers included were those who specifically carve for ceremonial use as well as for the market; this fact explains notable absences such as Bill Reid and David Neel, and it continues to privilege ethnographic authenticity. In addition, all of the masks were treated by Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw ceremonial specialists. At the closing reception, chief Henry Sewid walked around and blew eagle down, a purifying symbol, onto the masks – or more typically, onto the Plexiglas boxes in which they were mounted. Curator Robert Joseph spoke of the masks not as art, but as "sacred objects." Dances were done, followed by a distribution of money to the audience according to typical potlatch protocol. How can the average non-Native viewer, filled with preconceptions and stereotypes, reconcile the fact that objects made for the market are spoken of and treated as sacred?

A visit by a First Nations group further suggests the complicated status of the masks on display. One of the objects in the show was the famous stone mask from Kitkatla that is now held by the Museum of Civilization. Approximately twenty-five people from Kitkatla raised funds in order to make the three-day trip to Vancouver to see the mask that was on exhibit in British Columbia for the first time since 1975. A Native gallery guide (Dena Klashinsky, who related the episode to me) showed them to the mask where they proceeded to cry and sing. The VAG had anticipated the visit and issued a press release declaring that the stone mask was returning to the province ("to its native soil") for the first time in years and that a group from Kitkatla would likely perform at the gallery. Given the importance of objects in the age of repatriation, it seems insensitive to so casually display the mask and speak of its "return" to British Columbia. While there is no clear indication that repatriation requests have been made to the Canadian Museum of Civilization for the stone mask, its display and its importance to the community could have become a forum for exploring the complicated nature of First Nations art today. Instead, it became an "ultimate masterpiece" (Macnair 1998, 10) and an opportunity for a public relations event.

Conclusion

The masks that were displayed in "Down From the Shimmering Sky" are in fact tourist art, ethnographic artifacts, crafts, fine art, and sacred objects. To simply call them "art" is to neutralize their history and agency, their power and potential. While some may have been made for and used in ceremonial performances, in general their current "sacredness" comes from their roles as components of family privilege, reminders of specific community histories, and markers of cultural or ethnic identity. In these roles, they serve an oppositional function: they define the identity, property, and rights of indigenous people against those of mainstream Canadian society. This dynamic continues a tradition of conceptual opposition and ambiguity: Victorian objects were symbols of primitive life, feared and valued for the same reason. While modernism and industrialization removed the necessity of the maker and his/her spirit from the objects, Native art was valued as handmade, infused with spirit, communing with the cosmos. Whereas the postmodern condition is characterized by globalized capital and fragmented identity, Native art comes to signify specific, local identity and connection to traditions. Postmodern theories removed the value of aesthetics from art altogether, and the fact that Native art continues to be displayed for its "beauty" may further underlie its continued oppositional value (Glass 2001).

Instead of hiding behind the safe language of art and universal appreciation (long abandoned in the mainstream artworld), why not explore specific issues, histories, and expressions when it comes to Native work? We can use objects such as the wrapped Humsumlth to communicate contemporary Native contexts and negotiations of indigenous values vis à vis mainstream society. We can juxtapose First Nation and curatorial statements to highlight divergent types of formal, theoretical, or political analyses. We can call attention to the specific history of objects as "art" – that is, how they came to be in the gallery setting, what different paths they have followed through the market, and what different values adhere to them. We can plan exhibitions with specific themes as an alternative to the ubiquitous surveys or solo shows. We can place First Nations work in a broader, comparative perspective by examining how art can provide a political and economic strategy across different cultural communities. But, most importantly, we can and must make any such decisions in consultation with Native artists, historians, and curators in order to avoid some of the more egregious misrepresentations of the past.

First Nations objects have rich histories with many layers of meaning and significance to different people at different times. To limit their communicative potential by marginalizing cultural information (too distracting or detailed) or political entanglements (too complicated and controversial), does both the objects and the public a disservice. Art galleries provide information to help visitors decode contemporary art as a matter of course, pointing out aspects of the individual's intentions, social contexts, political issues, and historical relevance. Seeing information of this sort as "ethnographic context" does not reduce these contemporary art objects to "artifacts." Why should the case be different with objects from indigenous cultures, regardless of the intentions of their makers, and regardless of their past or current status as commodities?

Notes

Warm thanks go to Lynda Jessup, Ruth B. Phillips, Charlotte Townsend-Gault and Kimberly Phillips for their useful comments.

1. There are different stories, exemplified by Haida accommodation and Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw resistance to colonization, with different responses to markets and local demand for objects. Macnair 1993, 47 compares Charles Edenshaw's "tourist art" with Willie Seaweed's "ceremonial art."

2. Alice Ravenhill utilized the resources of the Provincial Museum in Victoria to advocate for the maintenance of standards in Native art production, to mount exhibits of Native work, and to publish a handbook of "authentic" designs (Ravenhill 1944). Mildred Valley Thornton was active in the Labor Arts Guild, a socialist organization devoted to the integration of art and modern life for the benefit of all citizens, which held routine exhibitions at the VAG (Watson 1983, 72-7).

3. Northwest Coast objects were displayed at world fairs in Philadelphia (1886), Chicago (1893), St. Louis (1904), Portland (1905), Seattle (1909), and San Francisco (1939).

4. Similar recognition occurred in the New York artworld when the Museum of Modern Art displayed "primitive art" during the 1940s, and especially in 1946 when a number of surrealists and modernists mounted an exhibit of Northwest Coast paintings at the Betty Parson's Gallery (see Jonaitis 1981, Glass 2001).

5. *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, C.M.G., O.A., D.S.P., Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1951).

6. In 1958, post cards declaring "Kla-how-ya [Hello] from Totemland" were issued, Mungo Martin carved matching poles for the Queen of England and the Vancouver Centennial Museum, and the VAG exhibit "100 Years of British Columbia Art" began with Northwest Coast objects. In 1967, a "route of the totems" throughout the province was

established, and the landmark "Arts of the Raven" exhibit opened at the VAG. In 1971, new poles were commissioned as gifts to every Canadian province.

7. The title of the exhibit includes a cultural practice and the diminutive term "arts." The show consisted mostly of older works, and the catalogue incorporated extensive ethnographic information.

8. Panels by Bill Holm and Bill Reid set out stylistic analyses and statements of connoisseurship. Objects were isolated visually and accompanied with no specific information. Individual creators (especially Charles Edenshaw) were identified. A language of masterpiece abounded, and a gallery of contemporary work was included in the show.

9. Martin was also in the unique position to act as a broker, helping the Museum of Anthropology collect objects from Kwakwaka'wakw families; he set up deals, appraised material for authenticity and quality, and handled financial transactions (Glass 2000).

10. Reid helped collect old poles from Skedans, Tanoo, and Ninstints in the mid-1950s. In 1958, he was the main carver of the Haida village at UBC, and he participated in the 1967 VAG exhibit "Arts of the Raven."

11. In fact, Arts of the Raven, an influential Victoria gallery owned by Tony Hunt, opened in 1970.

12. Examples include Reid's *Raven and the First Men* (1980), bronze *Killer Whale* (1984), and *Spirit of Haida Gwai* canoes (1990); Davidson's poles (1986) in the PepsiCo sculpture collection; Susan Point's large posts and spindle whorls (1996) at the Vancouver Airport.

13. While *Province* critic Art Perry celebrated Reid for using "his talents to advance the perfection of the Indian art object," he later condemned prints as merely fueling "an anxious audience of speculating collectors and anthro-fetishists" while questioning if they were "for soul or for sale" (See "It's sham, rather than shamanism," 1 May 1980: D1; "West Coast Prints: for soul or for sale?" 22 November 1979: D1). Likewise, Jay Scott suggested that Natives "lost it at the trading post" when they began to make market-conscious art, and he criticized the "cottage industry of ethnographically conscious craftspeople" from the Northwest Coast who "confine themselves to the saleable at the expense of actual artists" ("I lost it at the trading post: Indian art is dead," *Canadian Art* 2 [1985]: 33-9).

14. David Young (1985) – owner of the Bent-Box gallery, one of the first spaces to show Native prints – wrote a brief to the VAG (where he was a trustee at the time) suggesting that its acquisition policy toward Native art reject the academic, "copyist" work favored by authenticity-bound ethnographic museums, and instead focus on originality, artistic merit, and masterpieces (although the criteria for these were not elaborated in his brief).

15. The catalogue, apparently a last-minute addition, provided some ethnographic and historical material, but I am concerned here with the gallery installation.

16. A senior VAG curator disputes the allegation that gallery staff specifically limited the nature or amount of text.

17. The VAG reported that, based on visitor surveys, "Down From the Shimmering Sky" was one of the most popular exhibits in recent history; this testifies to the sheer drawing power of indigenous objects displayed as fine art.

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After Essay – Indigenous Is the Local

Jolene Rickard

The inclusion of First Nations work in public art museums in Canada represents simultaneously a colonizing act and a decolonizing act. Does First Nations artwork enter a museum space as part of a national dialogue on Canadian heritage? Or alternatively, is the stature of the museum such that the artwork is detached from any construct of nationalism, and thus occupies an international, transnational or global space? Should nationalism or transnationalism be considered as part of the discussion? What is the role of First Nations self-determination or sovereignty in this discussion? How can we insert different worldviews or philosophical positions into a museum space?

A museum space is not neutral; the Art Gallery of Ontario, for instance, is one of many cultural faces of the Canadian state. In fact, "museums and their exhibitions have become controversial sites in a number of respects over the past few years ... they have moved to the forefront in struggles over representation and over the chronicling, revising, and displaying of the past" (Dubin 1999, 5). For the last twenty-five years, museum spaces have been sites where issues that seek to give voice to marginalized groups within dominant society have been cracked open (Raven 1993). First Nations artists are not a minority within our homelands, although our cultural and political authority is not central to the inherent framing of society in the Americas. In a landscape of political change, it has been difficult to strategize Aboriginal claims of inherent rights. The following discussion is directed primarily toward the work of contemporary artists; earlier work involves a different, but equally important, set of critical conditions.

Is it necessary to have a seamless inclusion of contemporary First Nations art with no analysis of signifying power relationships between First Nations communities and the Canadian government? Or alternatively, is the recognition of these power relationships an issue to be worked out only between the artists and the museum? How do the interconnected artistic and political needs of First Nations function in any national museum? The terms of inclusion in public art galleries would represent a level playing field if First Nations people – including artists – operated in conditions of equal economic and cultural empowerment in relationship to the Canadian state. Since this is not the case, how can this national cultural space be negotiated?

The antithesis to this position is that all artists are disempowered within an empirically-biased society; we must acknowledge that in Canada the cultural community has been more inclusive than other aspects of society. I do not mean to berate those museum and art professionals who understand what inclusion from an artistic and cultural view means. My intention, in this essay, is to tease out the complications of our ongoing relationship with each other as First Nations and Euro-North Americans in an attempt to articulate a platform of equity.[1]

It is also difficult to respond to this issue from a Canada-centric position. The experience of Indigenous peoples in North America is artificially historicized by the recently constructed national borders of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The physical, legal, and political border between the United States and Canada is a colonizing construct that separates many Native Nations (Graymont 1974). Does the inclusion of First Nations people stop at the border? If the inclusion of Native art is based on a geographic designation of identity, does this prohibit the inclusion of individuals such as George Longfish, a Seneca-Tuscarora artist who lives in California but is originally from the Six Nations community at Osweken? Is not his experience as important and telling as that of Native artists living in their homelands, which are also known as Canada. Longfish is part of an Iroquois diaspora that is tied problematically to geography. The Rez has become a tool used by internally colonized Natives to authenticate their experience and negate the claims of others to a Native heritage. Gerald McMaster, curator of the exhibition "Reservation X," points out that "fifty percent of aboriginal people in Canada and the United States now live off-reserve (1998, 19)." With regard to who has the right to define Indigenous homelands, it must be noted that Canada has yet to acknowledge its obligation to the terms of the Jay Treaty of 1794, which details our inherent right as "North American Indians dwelling on either side of the said boundary [between Canada and the United States] freely to pass and repass by land or inland navigation, in to the respective territories and countries of the two parties on the continent of America."[2]

Increased inclusion of Aboriginal art in the Art Gallery of Ontario will undoubtedly benefit individual artists. Unfortunately, communities of First Nations people have not survived five hundred or more years of contact in the Americas as "individuals." Ironically, if we cease to exist as Native people, this query is unnecessary. Alfred Young Man observed that, "aboriginal artists … are struggling today to become recognized and accepted in 'Canada' as artists within the context of their own history (1992, 34)." Is it possible for the viewing public in any Canadian or American national museum space to invert the colonial framing of Aboriginal history within a contact-narrative timeline? How can the viewing public embrace Aboriginal history as proceeding and ongoing if Canadian or America history is represented as the significant measurement – the "bookends" – of this experience? What if American and Canadian history, or even modern world history, were situated within an Aboriginal timeline? Ella Shot and Robert Stam have proposed the concept "polycentric multi-culturalism" as an alternative to liberal pluralism in the post-colonial debate about Eurocentrism and Third and Fourth World formations (1994, 8), and in so doing have moved the debate from a broad cultural analysis to a visual cultural analysis expressed as "polycentric aesthetics" (1998).

Native art entered the museum as anthropological specimens, and later migrated to the art museum (Berlo 1992, Graburn 1976, Phillips 1999). The well-defined battles over high versus low and art versus craft have enabled the discussion to move further (Clifford 1988, Phillips 1999). What was expressed as multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s, and as cultural equity in the 1990s has now shifted to a dialogue of diversity or difference (Lippard 1990). These shifts are reflected in a number of exhibitions in the United States: "Harlem on My Mind: The Cultural Capital of Black America, 1900–1968" (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979); "The 1993 Whitney Biennial" (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993); "The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s" (Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New Museum of Contemporary Art, and Studio Museum, Harlem, 1990); "Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965–1985" (Wight Art Gallery, University of California, 1991); "Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art" (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1994). For a brief moment in the culture industry "voice" was taken by hundreds of "othered" artists within the mainstream art world (Lippard 1990). But even with an intense examination of the culturally, politically, and economically dispossessed, issues concerning Indigenous artists barely surfaced. If we take New York as one of the most important centres of the art world, the recognition of "Indigenous" artists did not move the needle on the compass. The primary dialogue in the United States is between Euro-American and African-American people; the objectives involve issues of inclusion, access, and empowerment within the system.

The framing of Indigenous artists as coming from "sovereign" nations was not recognized in the art world. It could be argued that in today's transnational environment, when artists of any nation exhibit, the nation or ethnicity expressed is not important for a contextual framing of the work. Indeed, if the audience completely understood the subjugate relationship between recognized nations and unrecognized nations – including most Indigenous people globally – the discussion could move elsewhere. I am suggesting, however, that an understanding of the term "self-determination" as "sovereignty" is as critical a framing for Indigenous artists and art as the "gaze" is to the gendered discourse.[3] The fundamental issue is the exposure of an inequitable power relationship. By making sovereignty part of a national and international dialogue, museums shift the boundaries of control for the maker, the Native Nation, the gallery, and society. This is important because "museums are important venues in which a society can define itself and present itself publicly" (Dubin 1999, 3).

It comes as no surprise that the United States has no museums dealing with slavery or with the genocide against Indigenous people, but there is a museum that documents the Holocaust, which took place in Europe.[4] Further, issues involving First Nations or Indigenous people have low priority within the most powerful first-world nation. Average Canadian citizens seem to be more aware of issues concerning First Nations people. In my college classroom at the University at Buffalo, a border town university with a large population of Canadian students, I find that students from Canada are familiar with and expect to discuss First Nation art and related issues in the field of art history, but I am constantly challenged by American students as to why it is important to study these issues. It is my experience that Canada does a better job in educating its population concerning a dialogue of diversity.

The argument could be made that progress has been made in the United States with the congressional sanction to approve the construction of the National Museum of the American Indian on the last bit of available land on the Smithsonian mall in Washington, D.C. However, the building of this museum is fraught with complexities that are just as significant as the issues of inclusion at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In fact, in Native art circles, many see the formation of the National Museum of the American Indian as an opportunity for other art museums to shrug off their responsibility to include exhibitions focused on Indigenous art in their own spaces. The issue involves not only the geography of the museum but also the fact that Indigenous art within the context of the museum can inform the public about Indigenous experience. It also involves the role played by Indigenous art in the ongoing construction of Indigenous space – both culturally and politically.

It is impossible to overlook the powerful contribution that First Nations artists, curators, educators, and non-Native arts professionals have made in bringing the consciousness of Native people to the national stage. Recent critical exhibitions in both Canada and the United States have attempted to insert a First Nations "imaginary" on the public, including: "Indigena" (Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1992), "New Territories: 350/500 Years After" (Montréal and Québec, 1992), "Land Spirit Power" (National Gallery of Canada, 1992), "Submoloc Show/Columbus Wohs: 1992 Quincentennial" (Evergreen State College, 1992), "This Path We Travel" (National Museum of the American Indian, 1994), and "We, The Human Beings" (College of Wooster Art Museum, 1993). These exhibitions, and others, have consistently asserted the interconnected relationships between Aboriginal art, political structure, and philosophy.

In their essay for the 1992 exhibition, "New Territories: 350/500 Years After," Marion E. Jackson and Ruth B. Phillips wrote:

> *For over four decades aboriginal visual artists have been contributing in vital ways to the larger process of empowerment. As aboriginal people repeatedly assert, their art cannot be separated from politics, for self-representation – and the re-presentation of history that is a part of the process – is profoundly empowering. Art has been at the heart of politics just as politics have been, and remain, at the heart of aboriginal art, whether the specific subject is historical or contemporary, ironic or lyrical, sacred or mundane.*
>
> Jackson and Phillips (1992, 38)

In her discussion of the exhibition "We, The Human Beings," Thalia Gouma-Peterson referred to the way in which Native American people – such as the Cheyenne, Tsistsistas – have named themselves, and in so doing, recognized that "artists are consciously working to recover both personal and cultural identity through their creative acts" (1992, 7).

Museums, with their emphasis on object-specific visual primacy, do not fully meet the needs of contemporary artists from all backgrounds; specifically, they do not address the needs of Indigenous expression, particularly the emergence of performance art. Underscoring this observation, art historian Arlene Raven stated that it was clear "by the early 1970s (and even clearer today) that existing art institutions could not and would not adequately meet artists' needs, much less represent their demands for social change" (1993, 14). A similar argument was made by the artists who collaborated in the creation of "This Path We Travel," the 1994 inaugural exhibition of the National Museum of the American Indian venue in New York. The artists attempted to articulate a "fundamental distinction between Western art and native art," and argued that "art" as it is understood in a European-American context, did not exist for Native Americans. "The material, instead, was appreciated by the native maker and community principally for its communal, ritualistic, or ceremonial significance."

> *We believe this installation is a form of ceremony and ritual. It is based upon an older native model of cooperation and sharing ... We bring our own vision and experience to the ritual, which then becomes a multilayered vision of all the participants. Our collaboration therefore is an ancient continuous process. (ix)*

The question of what Indigenous artists and art professionals want from museums also provides an opportunity to ask what we want for an Indigenous future. Something much more important is either recognized or disguised in the potential inclusion of First Nations art. How does the inclusion of Aboriginal art contribute to the survival of First Nations? If the recognition of hundreds of First Nation experiences with various cosmological and ideological constructs are dissolved into a hegemonic whole, why bother with the dialogue of inclusion? If the dialogue is meant to erase the contribution of Aboriginal art – rather than to critically understand where Aboriginal art serves the ongoing exploration, validation, and memory of Indigenous worldviews – then unexamined inclusion is on target. In response to the ongoing discussion about repatriation, the late Deborah Doxtator made several critical points about our responsibility as Native people.

> *It's a slow realization that you have a responsibility to participate, and that this is the responsibility given to you as an aboriginal person. The Creator put you on earth to be a part of that, and that's what you belong to. That kind of ownership isn't a right. It's not like part of a native rights issue. To me, it's a human responsibility: everyone has to own who they are. You have to own who you are because if you don't take the responsibility, somebody else will and, when that happens, you end up having to live within the confines of what other people think your life should be.*
>
> Doxtator (1996, 56-57)

The "ownership" of the representation of Aboriginal "art" within a museum context is part of our responsibility as Aboriginal people. As often stated by elders within the Haudenosaunee communities, "each of us has a job to do." This is another way of expressing Doxtator's persuasive argument for defining our own experience.

A museum cannot serve every need, but it can display a broad range of ideas presented by Aboriginal artists. Museums can educate their audience to understand a multivalent experience of First Nations people that extends beyond the borders of Canada. These borders are not just geo-political, they are also philosophical.

My perspective on foregrounding the terms of "sovereignty" in the education of the audience should come as no surprise (Rickard 1995, 1998). For me, this is not political rhetoric; rather it reflects how I have been educated, how I understand our survival as a people. As a member of the Tuscarora Nation, located in ancestral homelands of the Seneca people of the Western Door, I am familiar with the Haudenosaunee assertion of sovereignty. The Tuscarora Nation, the Tonawanda Band of Seneca, and the Onondaga Nation maintain a traditional form of governance. Our clan and chieftainship system is different from the electoral systems that most Native communities follow today, although some have "traditional" elders that maintain the "ceremonies." However, this broad spectrum of First Nations governance is underscored by our shared assertion of sovereignty. The interpretation of sovereignty casts a wide net. Ironically, most members of our communities are directed toward thinking of themselves as "nations" within the context of a modern nation-state.

This may be an overstatement of the impact the museum has had on the public at large, but I believe this perspective on sovereignty is important for the art professionals who control museum spaces. The seamless inclusion of indigenous art in a first-world national museum with no opportunity to contextualize it – to recognize our continued struggle to be a self-determined people in our homelands, and to understand our distinct cosmologies and worldviews – will undermine the survival of First Nations communities. If the only interest in Native art is the visual aesthetic, if the political and philosophical dimensions of that art are merely footnotes, everyone will be deprived of an opportunity to rethink the Americas not only as an Indigenous space, but also as a continuously colonizing Canadian/American/European/Asian space. Internationalism should not displace the local; on the North American continent, Indigenous is the local (Wilson 1996, Lippard 1997).

Notes

1. A relevant Haudenosaunee symbol for the ongoing negotiation of our relationship to each other is the well known *Gwesenta* or Two-Row Wampum (Lyons 1992, 40). The *Gaswentah* or "*Gustwenta* is a long beaded belt of white wampum with two parallel lines of purple [wampum] along its length. The lines symbolize the distinct identity of the two peoples and a mutual engagement to coexist in peace without interference in the affairs of the other" (Berman 1992, 135). Chief Irving Powless of the Onondaga Nation near Nedrow, New York states, "The white beads denote truth. Our [Haudenosaunee] record says that one purple row of beads represents a sailboat. In the sailboat are the Europeans, their leaders, their governments, and their Way of Life, or religion. The other purple row of beads represents a canoe. In the canoe are the Native Americans, their leaders, their governments, and their Way of Life, or religion as you say it. We shall travel down the road of life, parallel to each other and never merging with each other" (Powless 2000, 23).

2. Akwesasne (Mitchell) *vs.*The Queen, *Akwesasne Notes*, Official Publication of The Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, I:1 (Spring 1995): 63. For a detailed discussion of the Jay Treaty and the early twentieth-century activism in defence of our (Haudenosaunee) right to move freely on our homelands, see Graymont 1973.

3. In addition to the legal perspective on sovereignty offered in Berman 1992, see the work of the late Ron LaFrance (2000), who provides an experiential perspective.

4. For an analysis of the genocide of Indigenous people in the Americas see Churchill 1998, 1992.

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Depending on Donations

Edmund Morris

Speaking of First Nations

Jeff Thomas and Anna Hudson

Could an installation of the work of a non-Aboriginal artist celebrated in current histories of Euro-Canadian art be designed to speak of contemporary First Nations? This paper posits a re-installation of paintings and drawings by Edmund Morris (1871–1913) held by the Art Gallery of Ontario that would raise Aboriginal visibility in the Gallery's Canadian wing. The design of this proposed re-installation reflects the collaboration of a First Nations independent artist and curator, Jeff Thomas, and an institutionally-placed art historian and curator, Anna Hudson. We are both searching for ways to broaden the story of Canadian culture told by the permanent installations of historical art in the Canadian wing. Our proposal involves a contemporary intervention from an Aboriginal perspective of Morris's work among First Nations between 1905 and 1911, focusing on his portraits of aging treaty chiefs of the Reservation Era. Such an intervention would address the question of Aboriginal invisibility in the Canadian wing and engage visitors in a critical exploration of images of First Nations in Canada's visual culture.

Anna Hudson: Morris's place in the Canadian wing of the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) has been determined by a curatorial vision of the artist's significance in the canon of Canadian art. This vision has in turn been affected by the AGO's collection of Canadian historical art and by the place Morris's art has traditionally held in public and private collections generally.

The Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) owns six works by Edmund Morris. Currently, only two of these, *Girls in a Poppy Field* (ca.1896) and *Indian Encampment on Prairie* (ca.1911), are hung in the permanent collection installation of the Canadian wing. *Girls in a Poppy Field* came to the Gallery in 1918 as a gift of Sir Edmund Walker, a wealthy businessman and powerful patron of Canadian contemporary art who was involved in the establishment of both the Art Museum of Toronto (now the AGO) and the National Gallery of Canada. Walker's purchase of the painting is a testament to Morris's popularity. *Indian Encampment on Prairie* was given to the AGO from a private collection in the late 1980s. Like *Girls in a Poppy Field*, it is a conservatively impressionist landscape image representative of early twentieth-century modernist painting in Canada.

Four Morris works are stored in the AGO vaults. Two large portraits – *Chief Bull Plume, Stumiksisapo, Piegan* and *Portrait of Nepahpenais (Night Bird)* (figs. 19, 20) – document the first and second trips Morris made to the prairies (in 1907 and 1908) to depict the aging chiefs of historic treaty negotiations. *Chief Bull Plume* came to the AGO as a bequest of the artist in 1922; *Portrait of Nepahpenais* was a gift of the Ontario College of Art (now Ontario College of Art and Design) in 1932. The College of Art, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Gallery, and several other institutions were designated as recipients of Morris's collection after his death. Morris chose the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto to be the sole recipient of the huge collection of First Nations material that he and his father, the Hon. Alexander Morris, had amassed during their lifetimes. The remaining two works in the AGO vaults– *Story Telling* (1909) and *The Artist* (1909) – were purchased by the AGO in 1998. These two small sketches were part of the artist's bequest to the Ontario College of Art.

Girls in a Poppy Field and *Indian Encampment on Prairie* are currently on display in the Canadian wing of the AGO in a gallery devoted to members of the Canadian Art Club. The Club, founded in Toronto in 1907, gathered together artists seeking independence from the Ontario Society of Artists and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. The Canadian Art Club, unlike the OSA and RCA, received no direct government support, and encouraged a modernist ideal of progressive painting through experimentation and creative independence from the existing artists' societies. In so doing, it aspired to engender a new and truly Canadian art (McTavish 1925, 74; Colgate 1943, 75). The standard survey texts of Canadian painting – J. Russell Harper's *Painting in Canada: A History* (1977, 207) and Dennis Reid's *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (1988, 123–9) – identify the Club as the predecessor of the Group of Seven and locate the roots of the Group's nationalistic landscape aesthetic in the Club's choice of Canadian subjects rendered with loosely impressionist techniques.

Indian Encampment on Prairie and *Girls in a Poppy Field* are atmospheric, "tonal" landscapes typical of Morris and his Canadian Art Club colleagues. Morris began his formal art training in Toronto with the academic painter and portraitist William Cruikshank. From 1891 to 1893 he studied at the Art Students' League in New York, again with academically-trained artists; Kenyon Cox, H. Siddons Mowbray, and William Meritt Chase were conservative-minded advocates of an American cultural enlightenment. An extended stay in Paris, where he studied at the Académie Julian (1893) and the École des Beaux-Arts (1894–96) brought Morris into contact with Jean-Léon Gérôme, a genre painter known for his veristic renderings of quasi-historic and exotic subjects. When Morris returned to Toronto in 1896, his closest colleagues were William Brymner, Maurice Cullen, and Edmond Dyonnet; all four artists were interested in painting

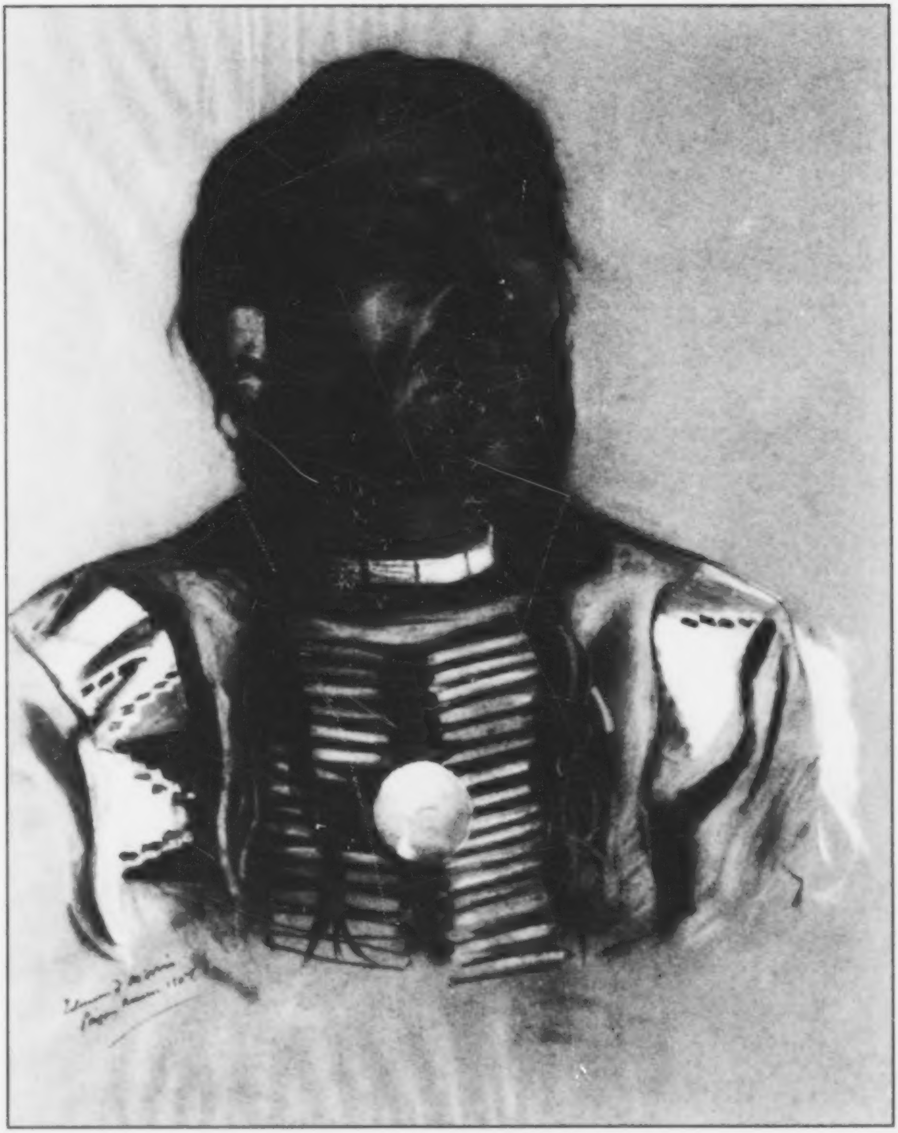

Figure 19
Edmund Morris, *Chief Bull Plume, Stumiksisapo, Peigan,* 1907. Pastel on paper, 64.8 x 50.8 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; bequest of Edmund Morris, 1922, acc. no. 655. Photograph: Art Gallery of Ontario.

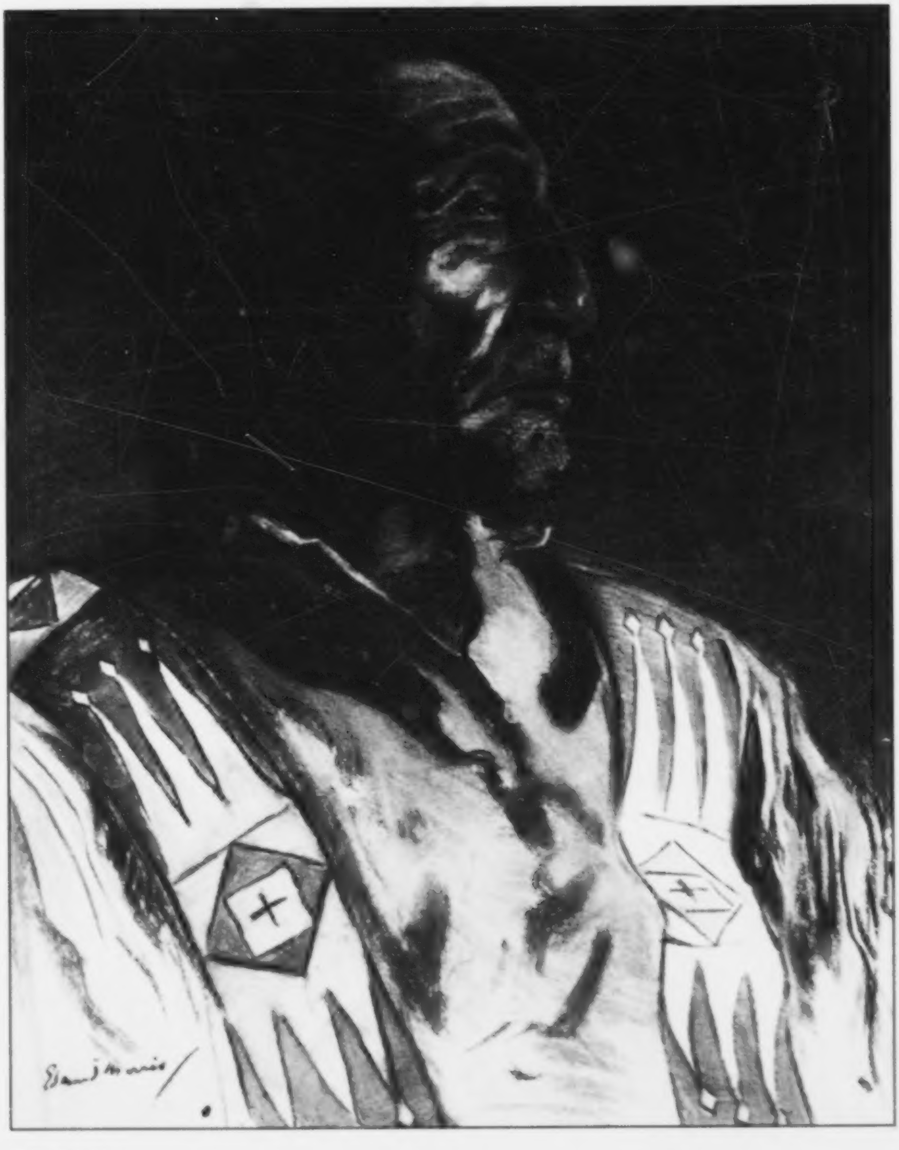

Figure 20
Edmund Morris, *Portrait of Nepahpenais (Night Bird)*, 1908. Coloured chalks on paper, 63.9 x 50.6 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; gift of Mrs. Harold Hunter, Toronto, in memory of her husband, 1989, acc. no. 89/393. The two portraits by Morris in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario document the first and second trips Morris made to the prairies to depict the aging Chiefs of historic treaty negotiations. Photograph: Art Gallery of Ontario.

moody and even nostalgic impressionist Canadian landscapes, and all except Cullen produced portraits. Brymner and Cullen were also members of the Canadian Art Club.

The current AGO installation of Morris's work with the Canadian Art Club ignores the possibility of stressing Morris's depiction of Aboriginal life in *Indian Encampment on Prairie* in favour of a curatorial focus on the Club's cultivation of modernist ideals in anticipation of the Group of Seven. As part of the Canadian wing, the Canadian Art Club gallery is positioned within a formalist narrative that describes a history of stylistic development from late nineteenth-century academic painting (housed in the Georgia Ridley "salon" gallery) and a large installation – the hub of the Canadian wing – that is devoted to the work of the Group of Seven. This pre-eminence of the Group of Seven reveals the Group's legacy at the AGO, where it influenced the exhibition and collection of modern Canadian art for over two decades (see Art Gallery of Ontario 1990, 44–6).

In principle, the weakest area of cultural representation in the Canadian wing – Aboriginal historical art – should be pinpointed for collection development with the understanding that there is a correlation between the total collection of works available for display and the history of art that the curators "write" in their choice of works for permanent installations. The Canadian department has already announced a plan to build the AGO's Native art holdings, having taken the initial step of installing fifty turn-of-the-century miniature Haida argillite poles acquired by donation in 1996. In the case of Edmund Morris, we have identified an opportunity to focus on his images of First Nations, using works currently stored in the vaults in addition to those on display. The AGO could also acquire more of Morris's portraits of chiefs, document a greater number of the artist's encounters with Native leaders, and even document the collection of "artifacts" that Morris acquired during his encounters with First Nations. His exhibition, "Indian Portraits and Artifacts," held at the gallery of the Canadian Art Club in 1909 (fig. 21), provides a historical precedent for combining the portraits and the objects. However, a revival of the 1909 show would also revive the perception that, as one reviewer put it, Morris documented "the sole survivors of the great race of redmen in Canada" (quoted in McGill 1984, 108). No reinstallation of Morris's work in the Canadian wing can afford to be so indifferent to the continuing vitality of Aboriginal cultures in Canada.

Before suggesting that the AGO build its collection of Morris's work or develop a related installation of historical Native art, we must clarify the purpose of revisiting the current installation of Morris's paintings. In order to appreciate how Morris's work might be used to speak of First Nations in the Canadian wing of the AGO, we must look at the existing collections of First Nations art and the Aboriginal presence now evident in the wing.

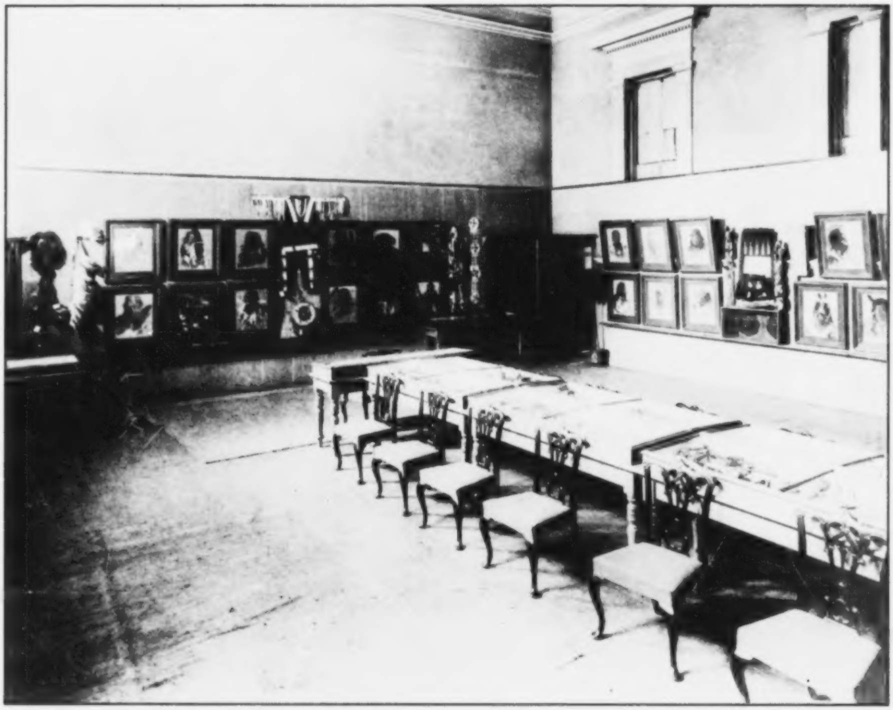

Figure 21
"Indian Portraits and Artifacts," 57 Adelaide Street East, Toronto, 29 March – 17 April 1909. Installation photograph. E.P. Taylor Research Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; gift of Edgar J. Stone, 1953. In 1909 Edmund Morris held an exhibition of paintings and First Nations artifacts at the gallery of the Canadian Art Club in Toronto.

An Aboriginal Presence in the Canadian Wing

Anna Hudson: Aside from a substantial body of Inuit carvings, prints, and wall-hangings, the collection of First Nations art at the AGO is small. The selection of Inuit carvings installed in the Canadian wing is separated from the historical collection of Euro-Canadian art. The collection of Haida argillite model poles carved by Charles Edenshaw (*Da.axiigang*) and Isaac Chapman (*Sƙillai*) is integrated into the Euro-Canadian art collection as part of a larger installation of sculptural highlights from late-nineteenth-century Canada. Edenshaw and Chapman emerge as skilled craftsmen on par with Québec woodcarvers and Ontario stonemasons, and all are seen as equal in achievement to the academic painters of post-Confederation Canada hung in the adjacent salon gallery. The Haida carvings are the only works by Aboriginal artists displayed in the wing. On the other hand, images of First Nations by Euro-Canadian artists are relatively numerous.

The chronological arrangement of the galleries in the Canadian wing prescribes a formalist reading of Euro-Canadian art over two centuries, from the French and English settlements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to 1970, the date that demarcates the contemporary period in the AGO collection. The earliest Euro-Canadian representations of First Nations are the nineteenth-century paintings by Paul Kane and Cornelius Krieghoff. The popularization of "Indian" images in the mid-1800s coincides with the evolvement of a nascent Dominion through economic expansion and the development of a tourist trade. The late nineteenth-century Haida argillite model poles (fig. 4), displayed just beyond the gallery featuring Kane's and Krieghoff's work, are products of a maturing tourist trade. These poles satisfy a touristic stereotype of mass-produced "authentic" Aboriginal goods, but the sophistication, refinement, and skill of the carving, on a par with Euro-Canadian fine art, may well surprise the average (non-Aboriginal) visitor to the Gallery. The point of the installation is to blur the boundaries between tourist or souvenir art and fine art, and to broaden the history of style that orders the Canadian wing. While this installation is an important beginning for the representation of diverse cultural histories, the Euro-Canadian aesthetic paradigm ultimately restricts our understanding of the work. The installation of both the Kane and Krieghoff "Indian" images and the Haida argillite sculptures should instead challenge the roots of this paradigm in a formalist aesthetic and expose the Dominion's economic ties to British tourist markets.

A gallery devoted to the painting of Emily Carr is the final representation of First Nations in the Canadian wing. This display of Carr's paintings of Northwest Coast Aboriginal villages documents the lives of people that are otherwise absent – figuratively and literally – from the depicted "Canadian scene." Similar work by Carr was first exhibited at the Art Gallery of Toronto in early 1928 as part of the touring National Gallery show, "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern." That exhibition (which has been raised as a possible model for a reinstallation of this gallery) provides an opportunity, within the dominant narrative of Euro-Canadian art, to document the fact that Carr's images also record the stylistic relationship that she and her contemporaries saw between the modern and the primitive. However, both the 1928 show and the current installation overlook the reality of First Nations in Canada and the autonomy of Aboriginal cultures. The Aboriginal, absent from Carr's village scenes, is represented only by the ruins of a once thriving culture. The sequential Canadian wing installations of Kane and Krieghoff paintings, followed by the Haida argillite carvings, and then by Carr's work, seem to tell a story of First Nations cultural disenfranchisement and disappearance from a Canadian cultural heritage.

New acquisitions of First Nations art, made largely by donation over the last few years, will play an important part in the revision of the story told in the Canadian wing. Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray, and Arthur Shilling are now represented by a few paintings, prints, and drawings. Their work is being considered in plans for a larger installation dealing with Aboriginal self-definition and the self-conscious emergence of a Native art movement in Canada during the 1960s. A recent donation of metal and jewellery work created by Bill Reid would likewise challenge the impression that First Nations cultures have vanished. Post-1970 Aboriginal contemporary art (including work by Rebecca Belmore, Carl Beam, Robert Houle, Joshim Kakegamic, Shelley Niro, and Jane Ash Poitras), cogently reflects on the socio-political and cultural changes that removed Aboriginal peoples from sight in Euro-Canadian national life. The treaties, written during the Reservation Era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the period recorded by Edmund Morris as a well-known Indian portraitist – represent one of the definitive aspects of this change.

Reasons to Revisit the Current Installation of Morris

Anna Hudson: Morris's emergence as an official Indian portraitist began with his refashioning of the exotic and the historic content of late nineteenth-century academic painting for the Canadian context. Following the sale of two "Indian" drawings – one of Chief Big Bear and one of Chief Crowfoot – to Governor General Lord Minto Morris began to receive Government portrait commissions. In 1906 the Ontario government commissioned Morris to join Duncan Campbell Scott and the James Bay Treaty (Treaty No. 9) party to paint portraits of the Native leaders involved in the negotiations. In 1907 (the same year that he resigned from the Ontario Society of Artists to co-found the Canadian Art Club) Morris held an exhibition of uncommissioned portraits of Six Nations people from Brantford. He also accepted a second Ontario government commission to produce portraits of chiefs involved in the late nineteenth-century treaties – notably those for which his father had acted as a commissioner – and he traveled west annually for the next two years. In 1909, he was commissioned a third and fourth time to produce portraits of Native leaders involved in treaty negotiations in the western provinces. The Saskatchewan government requested fifteen portraits and the Alberta government requested five portraits for their respective Legislative Buildings in Regina and Edmonton.

Treaties were also part of Morris' early life. Morris was the privileged son of the Hon. Alexander Morris who was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and the Northeast Territories, and was stationed at Fort Garry (1872–77), when Edmund was a young child. As Lieutenant-Governor, Alexander Morris was engaged as a commissioner for Treaty No. 3 (The Northwest Angle Treaty), Treaty No. 4 (Qu'Appelle Treaty), Treaty No.5 (Lake Winnipeg Treaty), and Treaty No. 6 (Fort Carlton-Fort Pitt

Treaty), as well as the revision of Treaty No.1 and Treaty No. 2. He was also instrumental in recommending the formation of the North-West Mounted Police in 1873 to ensure the West was clear for European settlement. In 1878, Alexander Morris returned to Ontario with a sizable collection of Aboriginal souvenirs, most of which he had acquired as gifts during treaty negotiations (McGill 1984, 25–7).

Morris sealed his reputation as Canada's official Indian portraitist with the publication of *Portraits of the Aborigines of Canada and Notes on the Tribes: Catalogue of the Morris Collection of Indian Portraits at the Gallery of the Canadian Art Club*, that accompanied his 1909 exhibition of Indian portraits and artifacts. He was considered a pioneering Canadian painter. "An earnest attempt to promote the cause of Canadian art was made," wrote William Colgate, "through the efforts of Edmund Morris, well known for his authentic Indian studies" (Colgate 1943, 73). It is hard to imagine that Morris's official portraits functioned as anything but trophies used to normalize the treaty process and to pay empty respect to Native signatories. Yet Morris himself probably respected the men he portrayed. He sought them out, sometimes in their old age, and depicted each in the guise of a Canadian dignitary. His commemoration of these leaders and his concerted efforts to preserve his collection of artifacts in the ethnology collection of the Royal Ontario Museum reflects what James Clifford has described as the colonialist "salvage paradigm" (Clifford 1988). There is no other Euro-Canadian artist who recorded the Aboriginal faces of the Reservation Era. The faces of his sitters remain enigmatic vestiges of "Canadian" stories never told. They speak of a significant moment in Aboriginal history that has been overshadowed in the story of Canadian art by a narrative that stresses the stylistic development of modernism and nationalism in the arts. A reinstallation of Morris's Native portraits would provide a unique opportunity to introduce an Aboriginal voice into the Canadian cultural narrative in direct counterpoint to the Euro-Canadian aesthetic paradigm that dominates the Canadian wing.

Jeff Thomas: One fundamental consideration is the impression visitors take away from a visit to AGO's Canadian wing. Think about asking visitors such questions as: "What did you learn about Aboriginal people?" or "Who are today's Aboriginal leaders?" My interest lies both in the public's fascination with the iconic representations advanced by the Indian portraitists and in how both the history and contemporary reality of urban First Nations have been obscured by the stereotypes that these portraitists helped to create. Are museums and art galleries complicit in the perpetuation of this visual stereotype? The AGO's presentation of works by Edmund Morris, Paul Kane, Cornelius Krieghoff, and Emily Carr do not provide a reasonable response to my questions. My objective is to determine how to effectively engage these works and make them relevant to issues facing both Aboriginal people and general gallery visitors.

In order to consider the work of an Indian portraitist in this light, it is important to note the following points. First, the phenomenon of the nineteenth-century Indian portraitist is not without a history; it could be said to have begun with the earliest European explorers who often abducted Indians, took them back to Europe, put them on display (along with other New World discoveries), and trained them as potential informants and interpreters (Trigger 1985, 125). In other words, from the time of the first encounters between Aboriginal people and Europeans, the Indian has been seen as a commodity. Second, when the Indian portraitists first visited First Nations communities in the nineteenth century, there was no comparable Aboriginal portrait tradition. Consequently, it has been difficult to judge the accuracy and value of the portraitists' work from a First Nations perspective. The artists certainly profited from their field studies, but what value did the First Nations communities gain from the work? Third, the development of photography in the late 1830s eventually replaced the painted portrait. Unfortunately, like the portraitists who used First Nations people as subjects, these photographers were attracted to the plains Indian warrior. The best-known proponent of this stereotype is American photographer Edward S. Curtis, who entrenched this image of the Indian in the imagination of the Euro-American public largely through his work on the massive, 20-volume encyclopedia *The North American Indian*. What was the reality that First Nations people were facing at the time that Curtis was making his photographs?

This is the question I bring to the work of Edmund Morris. I first encountered Morris as a photographer, during research at the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature in the late 1980s. A large photographic reproduction of Chief Weasel Calf and his wife was hung on a corridor wall. I was intrigued by the strength exhibited by the couple, shown in full length and quarter profile against a prairie backdrop of sky and grass. They are dressed in buckskin-style clothing, decorated with beadwork and ermine, befitting their position in the community. (Chief Weasel Calf, a Blackfoot, participated in the signing of Treaty No. 7.) I was informed that other Morris photographs were stored at the Manitoba Archives, where I later viewed his work and learned that he was a portrait painter who focused on First Nation leaders living in the West. Morris's body of work offers a unique opportunity to compare painted images with photographs produced by the same artist and, in doing so, to suggest some of the realities facing the First Nations people he portrayed.

A Proposed Reinstallation of Morris Works

Jeff Thomas: My recent curatorial work "Emergence From the Shadow: First Peoples' Photographic Perspectives," is an exhibition based on photographs. The show was developed in 1999 for the First Peoples' Contemporary Art Gallery at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. "Emergence" encapsulates my quest to link the First People's

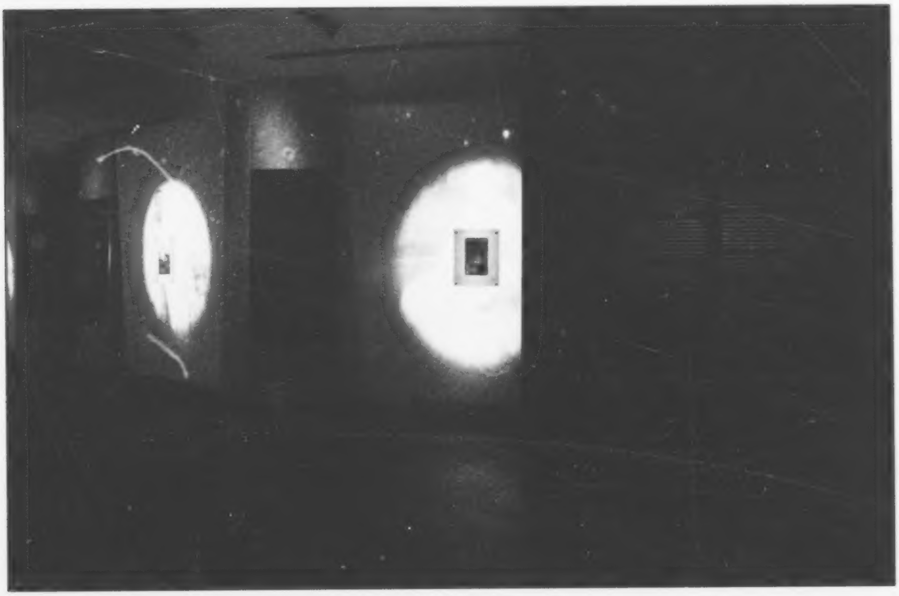

Figure 22
"Emergence from the Shadow," Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, 23 October 1999 – 2 January 2001. Installation photograph. View of centre island and backlit enlargements. Photograph: Jeff Thomas.

past with today's urban First Peoples, and I would like to speak about it as a precursor to the Morris installation.

The first section of "Emergence," entitled "Through the Anthropologist's Camera," includes sixty-eight photographs of First Nations people produced by anthropologists employed by the Geological Survey of Canada during the years 1912–24 and 1949, and highlights photographs taken by anthropologists Charles Marius Barbeau (1883–1969), Harlan Ingersoll Smith (1872–1940), Fredrick Wilkerson Waugh (1872–1924) and Sir Francis Howe Seymour Knowles (1886–1953) (see fig. 22). The second section of the exhibition, "Perspectives from the Urban Frontier," consists of the photo-based works by six First Nations contemporary artists, who provide a view of First Nations adaptation to the urban environment; it highlights the work of First Nations artists Shelley Niro, Greg Staats, Mary Anne Barkhouse, Rosalie Favell, Greg Hill, and Barry Ace (see fig. 23).

The development of "Emergence" as an exhibition began with the surprising portraits produced by the four anthropologists. I had expected to find photographs typical of the era – Indians dressed in tribal clothing and performing picturesque ceremonies – a

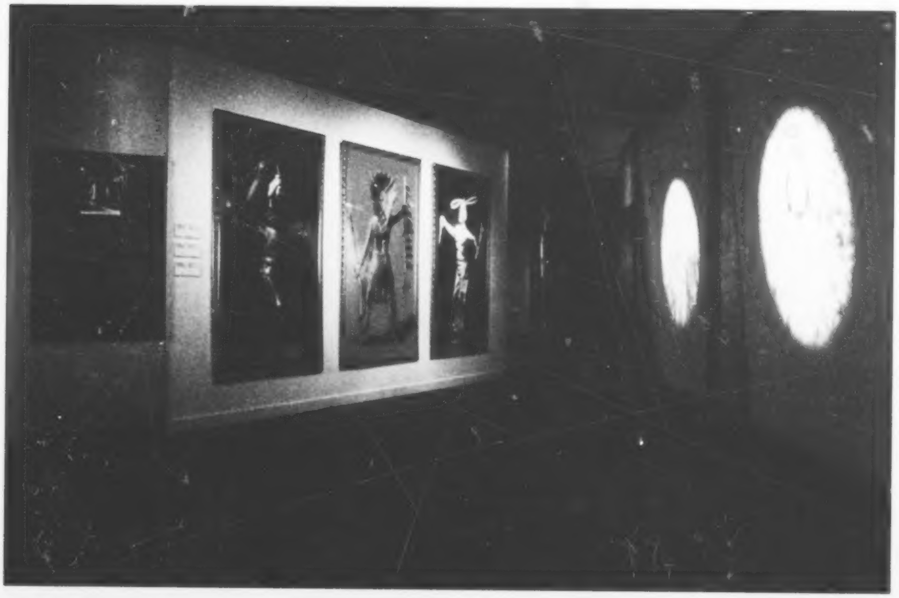

Figure 23
"Emergence from the Shadow," Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, 23 October 1999 – 2 January 2001. Installation photograph. View of contemporary section, Greg Hill (artist). Photograph: Jeff Thomas.

perception influenced by Curtis's photographs, their contemporary commercialization, and the popularity of the contemporary powwow. The technical quality of the anthropologists' photographs is excellent, but, more importantly, these photographs show Indians as real people in everyday situations.

As a young boy I often stayed at the Six Nations Reserve with elder family members and, while there, I was privileged to hear their stories about early Iroquoian life on the reserve. Occasionally they talked about the anthropologists who had come from Ottawa to study them and their parents. They often wondered what happened to the information collected by the anthropologists. My CMC discovery was like finding a forgotten family photograph album tucked away in the attic. Turning its pages revealed people I had only heard stories about. My experience of the photographs began to change from a detachment generated by static anthropological documents to excitement at finding and reclaiming a lost community history.

Unlike the often nameless faces of First Nation people commonly seen in popular culture, these people were identified: the anthropologists had recorded names, family associations, tribes, and community roles. Although the photographs often show the process of making baskets, snowshoes, or canoes, I began to notice that many stood out as portraits. Some were obvious portrait set ups. In a portrait of Chief Jacob General, the photographer avoided the typical composition (showing the Chief in profile or demonstrating a craft) and instead posed him against a log wall, highlighting his strong facial features and his engagement with the photographer. Other portraits that caught my attention were simply faces peering out from a particular field study scene. I had produced similar portraits during my photographic work with First Nations powwow dancers; I engaged dancers in an active dialogue by asking their permission to be photographed, describing my project, and then asking them to look directly into the camera lens. My sense is that good portraiture results when the portraitist engages or interacts with the subject, not as a dominant figure but from within a relationship in which the subject trusts the photographer.

A clue to the success of the portraits at the CMC was provided by anthropologist Harlan Smith. In the captions accompanying the photographs he made in British Columbia, Smith noted those in the community to whom he had sent photographs. This indicated a relationship that had existed between the anthropologist and subject. From the notes left by Francis Knowles and F. W. Waugh, I also learned that they had to negotiate with Longhouse traditionalist and chief Simon Gibson before they could enter the Six Nations community. Acting in his capacity as intermediary for field anthropologists who wanted to work on the Reserve, Gibson made the introductions, but it was up to the individual anthropologist to get inside the door. These anthropologists did not bully their way into people's homes. Some degree of negotiation took place between the anthropologist and the subject, and there were families who refused to be subjects. The process employed was similar to that used by an experienced portraitist, where success depends on personal interaction and trust.

Given the sense of "self" exhibited by the subjects, I wondered how influential they had been during the photography session. Did they determine where the photographs would be taken or what would be included in the scene? I was curious to know why people were often posed in front of the doorway to their homes, as was Nancy Miller, a Seneca woman photographed by Knowles in 1915. The photographs contradict the general perception of First Nations people as passive subjects who could not comprehend the act of taking photographs – a perception implied by historians working with such photographs, not by people from the communities in which the photographs were made. Did the subjects embed the photographs with a message for future generations? These Aboriginal people were experiencing the loss of their traditional culture, but in their thinking, they were also conscious of their responsibilities to their descendents, seven generations into the future. Yes, these photographs carry an important message.

To recover this message, I invited six First Nations artists to participate in "Emergence." My selection of artists was based on the quality of their work, their respect for tribal roots, and their diverse use of photography. During my studio visit with artist Shelley Niro I showed her photocopies of the historical photographs I intended to use. I wanted to ensure that the artists were comfortable with my approach. When I mentioned that I was working with the idea of how the past informs the present, Shelley responded by asking, "How does the present inform the past?" This was the response I hoped to find. The historical photographs I used to introduce each artist opened windows to the past and established a bridge that allowed the contemporary artists' work to respond. I envisioned the museum, and more specifically the gallery space, as a meeting ground of past and present.

However, I knew that such an exchange could only take place if the artists felt themselves to be part of the process. This became again apparent when I was searching for a relationship between Greg Staats's work and one of the historical photographs. I had wanted to include Greg's portraits of First Nations people living in Toronto (which form an important body of his work) but Greg wanted to exhibit photographs that were more personal. We chose Marius Barbeau's 1949 portrait of Six Nations herbalist Dan Smith as the link to Greg's work. Dan Smith is pictured in a position of power, proudly holding a bundle of dried plants with his store sign visible in the background. Then Greg showed me a photograph of a bundle of sticks on a Toronto street curb ready to be picked up by the garbage collectors. His new assemblage of photographs, drawn from his Toronto experience and from his old family home at Six Nations, created a powerful visual dynamic, and presented a strategy for survival in an urban space. At the last minute, Greg added a small family photograph of his father that had been taken at Six Nations in 1949, the same year that Barbeau photographed Dan Smith. Barbeau's documentary note that Dan Smith was also a road repair worker opened the window to metaphor. I imagined roads leaving Six Nations in all directions, one of them toward Toronto. Dan Smith had become an intersection for creating a new relationship.

I would like to see this type of relationship developed around the work of Edmund Morris. Compared to his predecessors, Morris may be a relatively unknown Indian portraitist, but a combination of his paintings, photographs, and personal notes could provide a point of departure for an engaging installation. The installation could include several Morris photographs of Chief Nepahpenais – of the Chief viewing his portrait; of the Chief storytelling; of the Chief and Morris posed together (fig. 24) – as well as Morris's two First Nations portraits, *Chief Bull Plume* and *Portrait of Nepahpenais*, introduced by a text panel including both Anna Hudson's perspective as a curator and art historian, and my perspective as a First Nations curator and photographer. This approach is similar to an idea I developed in "Emergence": five photographs

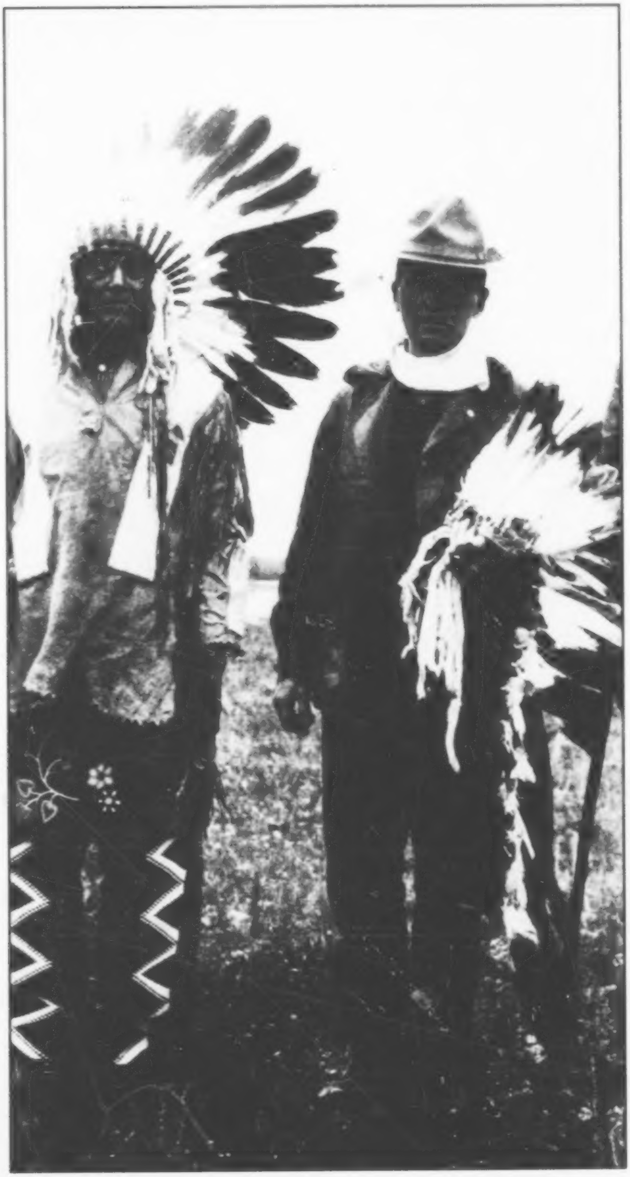

Figure 24
Edmund Morris and Chief Nepahpenais, ca. 1908–09. E.P. Taylor Research Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; gift of L.R. McTavish, 1976. Edmund Morris's photographic archive provides an extensive record of his work among the First Nations.

were accompanied by short texts providing a few clues to important elements in the photographs. I felt the information could give teachers or parents some direction in describing the photographs to children. The photographs were reproduced as backlit enlargements (see fig. 25). My intention was to challenge traditional framing techniques and institutional authority by giving the photographs a feeling of open-

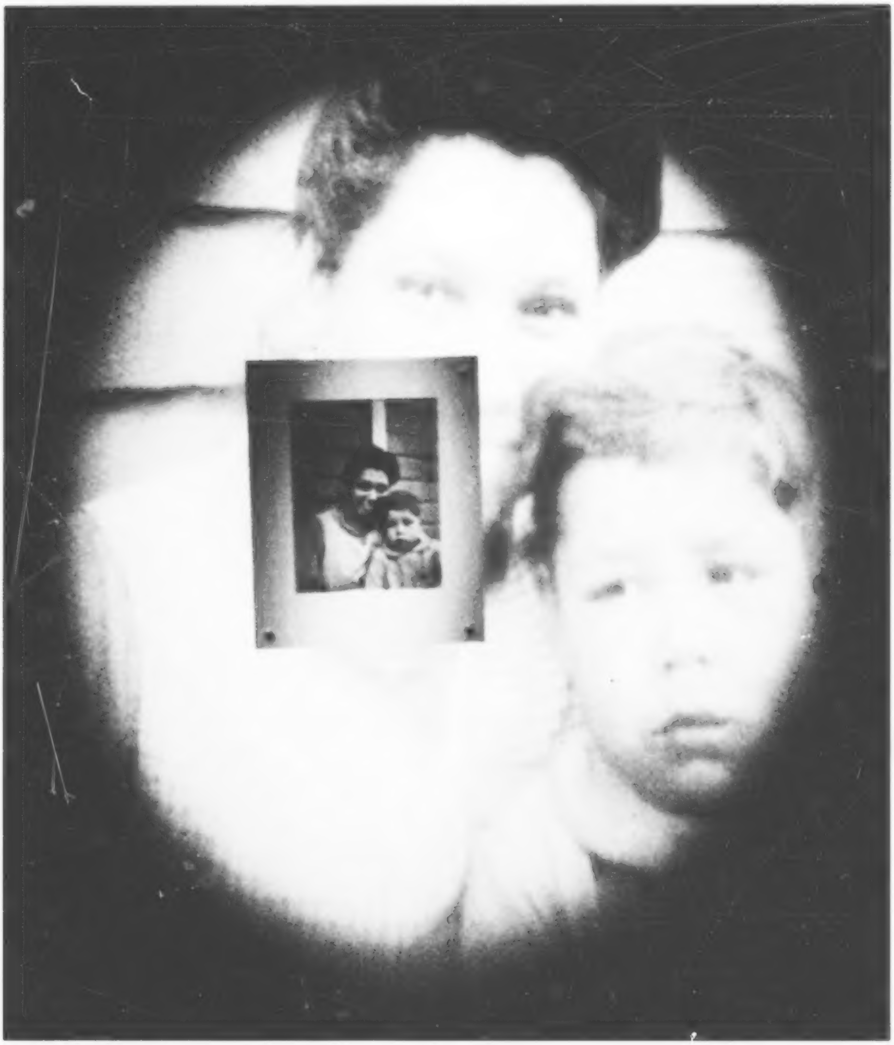

Figure 25
"Emergence from the Shadow," Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, 23 October 1999 – 2 January 2001. Installation photograph. View of *Mrs. Blue Sky* taken by Sir Frances Knowles, 1915, showing backlit enlargement. Photograph: Keri Cronin.

ness, and to create new "objects" for viewing by suggesting the possibility of new stories arising from them.

The next element of the installation could be a reproduction of Morris's photograph *White Buffalo Calf (Child-Unistaipoka) Viewing His Portrait* (ca. 1909; the original is in the collection of Morris photographs at the Manitoba Archives). This image is important because of its myth-breaking qualities. White Buffalo is shown looking down at an easel with his likeness (probably unfinished) on the canvas. A reproduction of the finished portrait could also be included in a diptych format, along with a short text describing the reasons for the diptych and the role of the photograph in Morris's work. (The text might read: "Back in Toronto, Morris had reproductions of many of the photographs he had taken during the course of the year sent off to reserves. In the winter of 1908, Father Laverne wrote that Running Rabbit, Iron Shield, the Cutter Woman, and John Drunken Chief at Gleichen were pleased to have their photographs" [McGill 1984, 91].)

My next proposal focuses on Morris's field sketch, *Story Telling*. The sketch shows a group of First Nations chiefs sitting around a large buffalo hide spread out over the ground. Morris had commissioned the chiefs to paint their life stories on the robe. One of the chiefs, possibly Running Rabbit, appears to be describing the painted symbols. The unfinished faces of the men in the sketch opens a window of opportunity to continue the story. This could be accomplished by means of a video-taped interview with a First Nations person (such as a community elder or a First Nations curator) whose interpretation would provide a community perspective. *Story Telling* bears a strong resemblance to a Morris field photograph showing several chiefs sitting around a large buffalo hide; this photograph could be used as a transitional element to contemporary works. Also, the buffalo robe is on display at the Royal Ontario Museum. A video-taped walk around of the robe along with an audio description of the Blackfoot tradition of pictographic representation could point out differences between Aboriginal storytelling and other images on display in the Canadian wing.

We might also focus on the idea of a continuing portrait tradition. The individuals painted by Morris held important positions in their respective communities. A section of the installation might be composed of contemporary photographic portraits of First Nations people by Greg Staats and myself. Staats has produced a body of work depicting First Nations people living in the city of Toronto. I photographed a group of First Nations people from the Treaty No. 7 area who visited the National Archives of Canada in 1996 to view the original treaty. I also suggest that books or portfolios showing a larger body of contemporary portrait work be available at a table where visitors would have an opportunity to look through them.

Changing the Narrative of Canadian Art History

Anna Hudson: Jeff's proposal to install contemporary portraits of Aboriginal descendants of the chiefs that Morris painted promises a remarkable shift in the way permanent collection installations engage the public in a cultural narrative. The relationship Jeff establishes between historical and contemporary images of First Nations is a powerful tool for introducing an Aboriginal perspective on Canadian cultural heritage.

To focus on the treaties and the contemporary urban Aboriginal leaders who continue to negotiate land claims and social, political, and cultural rights is to empower Morris's portraits to speak of First Nations. Moreover, a link between the paintings and drawings by Morris and Aboriginal historical art (accomplished by borrowing from another institution, the obvious example being "artifacts" from Morris's bequest to the ROM) would only serve to revive Morris's 1909 exhibition and silence the Aboriginal voices of the past – voices that Jeff so compellingly invites to speak in the present.

One way of achieving the Gallery's stated goal of offering an Aboriginal claim to its cultural space must be a critique of Morris' images of First Nations by a contemporary Aboriginal artist engaged in the revision of colonial history. (I suggest this in spite of the fact that the division of AGO departments into Canadian and Contemporary art – separating the past from the present – discourages linkages between the historical and contemporary First Nations art.) Jeff's proposed portrait photographs would invite comparison of Morris's historical figures with popular media images of today's Native leaders seen from an Aboriginal perspective (see, for example, fig. 26). No text panel, no docent, no other companion installation could highlight so effectively the power of images to evoke the social realities of a given time and place, and thus undermine the dominant narrative embedded in the canon of Euro-Canadian art.

The Future of Aboriginal Representation in the Canadian wing

Jeff Thomas: How can you have a gallery devoted to Canadian history and not have a place where the First Peoples story is told from their perspective? I would hope that art history and the Canadian wing would be enriched by such an installation. I envision a space where new works in the collection could be hung. Many First Nations artists use historical images in their work. We might also commission new works and use

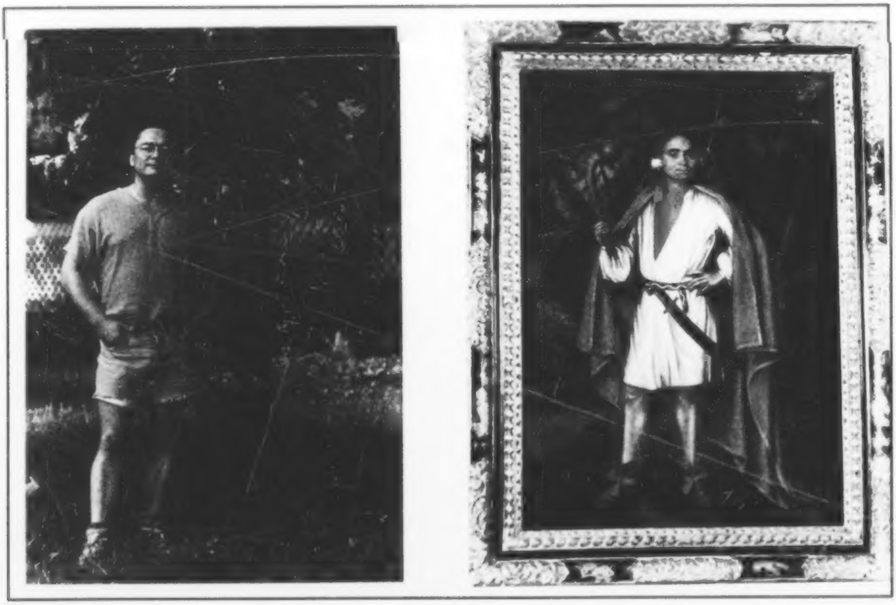

Figure 26

Jeff Thomas, *1997-1710,* from the exhibition "Ghost Dancing," The Photographic Gallery, Saskatoon, 8 September – 13 October 2000. Left: silver gelatin print, 35 x 23 cm; right: colour reproduction (National Archives of Canada, C-092421), 35 x 23 cm. *1997-1710* is an example of Thomas's approach in building a relationship between a First Nations past and present. On the left is a portrait of Joe David, a Mohawk. Thomas made the portrait while visiting David at his home on the Kanesatà:ke Reserve in 1997. Joe was a warrior at Oka in 1990. The image on the right is a reproduction of a portrait that was made in England in 1710 by Jan Verelst. The sitter was Nicholas, a Mahican, who accompanied three Mohawk men to England in 1710. The delegation was one in a long line of political maneuverings on the part of the Iroquois, the English and the French. Photograph: Jeff Thomas.

video or documentary film. The broader scope of such an installation would benefit all visitors to the gallery. Many tourists who come to Canada want to know about Aboriginal people, but what about the needs of Aboriginal people who *live* in Canada –particularly Toronto? Programming and outreach to the Aboriginal community should be an important consideration.

Anna Hudson: I have specific ideas for future installations to increase Aboriginal representation in the Canadian wing. Some of these have been discussed at the departmental level and all are dependant upon a fundamental rethinking of the temporal division between Canadian historical art and contemporary art at the AGO evident in the division of curatorial departments and in the current installations of the permanent collection galleries. In the installation of Inuit art, historical and contemporary Inuit works are placed together. This is possible because the collection is separated from the rest of the permanent collection. The decision to integrate Aboriginal art into the Euro-Canadian galleries immediately raises the question of how to acknowledge varied conceptions of history and tradition, and of geographic place.

We must explore a variety of installation solutions in order to achieve inclusiveness and relevancy in the permanent collection galleries. Throughout the Canadian wing, we will need to use multiple strategies in our representation of First Nations historical art and perspectives alongside Euro-Canadian historical art so as to relate these disparate visual cultures. One approach – suggested by the installation of argillite carvings by Edenshaw and Chapman – is to insert Native historic art into the existing canon of Euro-Canadian art according to its qualitative correlation with late nineteenth-century academic painting. Jeff's proposed contemporary intervention in the installation of works by Edmund Morris operates as a critique of the existing narrative and the value it places on Morris's painting as evidence of the advancement of modernism and nationalism in Canada. We might use a similar approach in the reworking of the gallery featuring the paintings of Emily Carr. During early departmental discussions of a potential reinstallation of the Emily Carr gallery, the possibility of revisiting the "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern" was raised. Plans were stalled, however, because the re-establishment of the stylistic relationship between modern and primitive which is central to both the show and the dominant narrative of Euro-Canadian art, would fail to respect Aboriginal perspectives and First Nations cultural autonomy.

Another immediate concern is the two gallery spaces devoted to the beginning and the end of the chronological story laid out in the Canadian wing: the spaces now devoted to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and to the 1960s, respectively. The galleries currently devoted to the arrival of a European artistic tradition from France (Lower Canada) and Britain (Upper Canada) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries must acknowledge pre-contact Aboriginal visual cultures. However, there are no precedents for the presentation of these cultures in the art gallery context. Should we supplement these installations with works borrowed from other institutions? Should regional visual cultures of First Peoples in the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes areas be played opposite the fine arts established in Lower and Upper Canada? We feel more confident about the 1960s gallery located at the other end of the wing. Here we have an opportunity to explore a decade of Aboriginal self-definition in the visual arts.

A Presentation of Edmund Morris that Speaks of First Nations

Jeff Thomas: The proposed installation shows how all aspects of life are related in the Aboriginal world. In a traditional or historical sense this was very true. I feel that the same principle applies to contemporary Aboriginal experience. We take advantage of available resources and we develop new stories.

Edmund Morris provides an opportunity to open the door to the representation of Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian wing, not so much because of the significance of Morris's work, but because of the people he painted – the people who do the speaking. Morris and others often spoke of capturing the dying red man. Does this phrase mean that all Indians were dying? Indian portraitists believed that they were gathering images of the last vestiges of a people – a people born into a society that still had its autonomy intact. During that harsh period of cultural change, the old world was still evident on the faces of the community elders. In this respect, the work of Edmund Morris represents a window to a very ancient past.

Anna Hudson: Currently the Art Gallery of Ontario is not a destination for First Nations who are either visitors to or residents of Toronto. Aboriginal participation in the Gallery experience must first be invited. Systemic change – in terms of staffing and reorganization of curatorial divisions to reflect diverse cultural perspectives – will transform the image of the institution. The relevance of Edmund Morris in plans for a reinstalled Canadian wing lies in providing opportunities for Aboriginal participation in the narration of Canadian art history. Morris's Indian portraits of the Reservation Era are among the most provocative works in the collection for a contemporary intervention from an Aboriginal perspective. The proposal to install contemporary Aboriginal portraits challenges the foundation of a Euro-Canadian art-historical narrative that stresses the artist's advancement of modernist and nationalist cultural ideals. The proposed Morris installation will allow us to instead explore images of First Nations in Canadian visual culture from diverse perspectives and to imagine a shared Canadian cultural heritage.

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Expanded Visions

Collaborative Approaches to Exhibiting First Nations Histories and Artistic Traditions

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Trudy Nicks

Introduction

Galleries and museums have often presented the material culture of First Nations as art, perhaps assuming along with James Clifford, that "one of the best ways to give cross-cultural value . . . to a cultural production is to treat it as art" (cited in Doxtator 1996, 18). This approach has been criticized because it ultimately "subordinates the objects and the ideas they contain to Western values and hierarchical structures" (Howard Morphy cited in Doxtator 1996, 18). For their part, contemporary First Nations artists have criticized mainstream galleries for systematically failing to collect or exhibit their works, either as part of the Western canon, or as representative of a separate aesthetic tradition (see for example, Martin 1991).

In the struggle to find appropriate frames for the representation of First Nations in mainstream cultural institutions, the political activism surrounding exclusion has served as an important catalyst to new conceptualizations of difference. It is important that artists and institutions are finding ways to breach old hegemonic policies and practices, but there is also the additional challenge of how to effectively communicate these new visions to the general publics who come to see exhibitions.

This paper addresses one issue raised by organizers of a symposium held at the Art Gallery of Ontario in March 2000 – namely, how to adequately represent First Nations aesthetic traditions in art gallery exhibitions when the gallery itself holds little historical work by North American Aboriginal peoples.[1] The organizers cited the need for serious consideration of the impact of displaying only sporadic examples of Aboriginal artistic production, and expressed concern that exhibiting limited collections poses the danger of a metonymical representation of an entire non-Western art tradition.

The following discussion considers realistic and practical alternatives to exhibits that are limited by the scope of institutional collections. The fundamental framework for this discussion is provided by new art history approaches to the representation of non-Western cultures and values. The new art history is concerned with cultural context and microhistory rather than universal, linear models (Phillips 1994, 41). This interest in the aesthetic and cognitive criteria of the producers of non-Western art has displaced the centrality of Western forms in traditional art history. In so doing, Ruth B. Phillips argues, it has opened the possibility for art history to become a truly universal study of visual aesthetic forms of human expression (1994, 44).

The paper is organized around three themes. I begin by dealing with issues in defining realistic expectations for the representation of non-Western art traditions. Being "realistic" means recognizing that institutional collections fall far short of providing a comprehensive record of visual expression in the past. It also means acknowledging the still-pervasive influence that Western concepts – such as the distinction between art and craft – play in exhibitions of First Nations work. Next, drawing on my own experience as a museum anthropologist, I discuss the practical value of collaborative approaches to exhibition projects. Collaboration facilitates effective use of available resources, but it also requires a sharing of authority. In the final section of the paper I consider the communication issues – within an institution, between institutions, and between an institution and its visitors – that are vital to the success of exhibition projects.

Being Realistic

The ideal of democratized art history and art exhibitions is appropriate and important in a post-colonial, postmodern era. Realistically, a comprehensive representation of non-Western aesthetic systems is not possible. In part it is a matter of the incompleteness of collections. It is well understood that historic collections never include more than a limited range of the material culture existing at any given time or place. Objects that are very large or perishable are seldom collected or preserved, and early collectors, who with few exceptions were non-Native, appear to have been interested in acquiring objects that were "unusual, historic, difficult to obtain and apparently bizarre" rather than collecting commonplace items (King 1982, 9). Christian Feest suggests that not even the largest museum collections provide fully-adequate representations of most cultures (1994, 90). Art gallery collections are at least equally wanting.

These biases in collecting are further compounded by the Eurocentric systems traditionally used to categorize non-Western peoples and their material expressions, and notions about what constitutes authentic or traditional culture. These systems are heavily influenced by colonialist assumptions about the ahistorical, unchanging nature of Aboriginal cultures. Geo-cultural distinctions, such as "the Northwest

Coast," or the "Northeast," may do more to obscure than reveal the scope and dynamics of indigenous aesthetic traditions. Ultimately, cultural regions are academic constructs that have become deeply embedded in mainstream consciousness where, Tuscarora artist Rick Hill reminds us, they operate as cultural clichés that overgeneralize and oversimplify Native expressive cultures (2000, 43).

The notion of authenticity or tradition as residing in "pure" Aboriginal culture, uncontaminated by European contact, is antithetical to understanding Native aesthetics. Deborah Doxtator has argued for the need to recognize the metaphorical thinking behind artistic production if we are to understand Aboriginal aesthetics. The same metaphors may be expressed in different visual styles; to focus on the surface appearance of form "side-steps the recognition of Native aesthetics and conceptual systems as viable ways of understanding art" (1996, 18). Doxtator's argument renders the art/craft distinction, so pervasive in Western analysis, irrelevant to an understanding of Native aesthetics.

It is productive to view historical collections as records of responses to cultural contact and exchanges. While adaptations in terms of form and material may be obvious, there is still a great deal to learn about the cultural processes underlying the material record. For example, both change and continuity are apparent, but understanding what underlies either process is a tricky business. A recognition of continuity does not necessarily mean we understand the cultural meaning(s), aesthetic or otherwise, that result in continuation of forms, motifs, or materials. It is possible that values may survive, and even promote, changes in material culture. For example, George Hamell (1983) has suggested that the ready acceptance of trade goods such as glass beads and brass and copper objects by Aboriginal peoples in northeastern North America, had to do with the perceived shared metaphorical qualities of these objects with local shell, crystal, and native copper – materials considered to be empowering gifts from supernaturals to human beings.

Hamell's insights for the early post-contact period assume widespread cultural homogeneity in northeastern North America, and he admits that limitations in historical data available for his study required this level of generalization; this serves as a reminder that information from earlier periods will probably never be complete enough to do more than infer metaphors across space. Certainly contemporary First Nations artists may have diverse opinions about what constitutes aesthetic importance. For example, Woodlands School and modernist artists from the same communities disagree about what is an appropriate aesthetic for their expressive art: a continuing Ojibwa visual tradition, or concepts and techniques imported from Western tradition.[2] A telling disagreement between two Tuscarora beadworkers, members of a group who came to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto in 1996 to see Iroquoian collections, arose over a beaded picture frame. A young woman described it as an "ugly" piece. An older woman responded, "There is no such thing as ugly beadwork." The young woman was judging the piece on surface appearance, and particularly on colour use. For the older woman the significance of the piece lay beyond the surface, in the gendered history and identity that it represented for her as part of a long lineage of beadworkers whose work has helped to preserve traditional symbols and values across generations.

Realistically, it may never be possible to access a record sufficient to provide more than a limited appreciation of aesthetic traditions through time. Knowledge of early aesthetic traditions is incomplete, in part because appropriate materials were never collected, and in part because the creativity of generations of artists leads to change and diversity over time. Perhaps the problem should not be expressed in terms of the impact of displaying only sporadic examples of Aboriginal artistic production and the danger of representing metonymically the whole of a non-Western art tradition. Instead, this problem should be framed in terms of questions about what can realistically be known and represented. Realistically, our collections and our understanding of cultural context and artistic intent over time will remain a subject for much conjecture, whether approached in terms of cultural regions or in terms of metaphor.

Being Practical

The foregoing discussion is not intended to downplay the richness of First Nations artistic traditions, nor to discourage institutions from including non-Western art alongside Western works. Although it is important to distinguish realistically between potential representation (what collections or studies can support) and idealized representation (exhaustive or encyclopedic coverage), it is certainly possible to go beyond the limitations of the resources of any single institution.

The new art history provides an intellectual framework for the integration of non-Western art into mainstream institutions. The decentring of Western art forms creates space for multiple aesthetic representations. The following discussion considers several practical approaches to the development of more inclusive exhibits. These approaches are "practical" in that they focus on what is feasible with available resources (collections, expertise, time, budgets, human resources). However, they often require new ways of thinking about both curatorial work and collections development and management. They may require a breaking down of institutional isolation – replacing competition with cooperation and a yielding, or at least a sharing, of curatorial authority. I will cite a number of recent examples that I am aware of, or have been involved in. Readers will no doubt be able to add others.

Sharing Collections

In an ideal world there would be ample money to acquire collections, to store them appropriately, and to create exhibits and publications based on them. Since the ideal situation rarely exists, cultural institutions must find other ways to access significant works. One highly-publicized example of collaborative collection building in the early 1990s was the joint acquisition by the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Galleries of Scotland of Canova's *The Three Graces*.[3] Other institutions in the United Kingdom have subsequently collaborated in the acquisition of important works. While it might require changes in attitudes and policies, there is no inherent reason why Canadian institutions could not contemplate similar joint acquisition and management projects to improve the scope of North American Native works available for exhibition. Such an approach to acquisition would spread the financial burden, and might well improve chances for obtaining private or government funds. Such joint efforts could also help to stem the flow of significant heritage into the hands of private collectors and/or across international borders.

Sharing existing collections is an even simpler way to find additional works to augment exhibitions. Inter-institutional loans are already commonplace, but the process of identifying works and expediting loan procedures could be improved by ongoing agreements to share databases and curatorial expertise. Curatorial networks might achieve essentially the same result. For example, curators at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature have detailed knowledge of the collections of Paul Kane art and artifacts in each other's institution and have planned exhibitions based on this knowledge. However, it would be more effective to have agreements that transcend the careers of individuals. *Museums West*, a consortium of ten museums in the United States and Canada, was formed in the mid-1990s to facilitate exchanges of collections and expertise. Their collaborative exhibition project, "Powerful Images: Portrayals of Native America," toured eight member institutions from January 1998 to January 2001.[4]

As First Nations and museums are negotiating the future status of many collections, one type of option under consideration is the custodial agreement. Under such an arrangement, objects or collections could reside with either party, while both may have responsibilities toward care and interpretation of objects.[5] Such arrangements may well promote the replacement of academic categories by indigenous categories that better represent the contexts in which the works were conceived and still have meaning.

Sharing Expertise

Exhibition teams that include First Nations as well as non-Native curators are effective in bringing more representative perspectives to a project. First Nations curators contribute their own specialized knowledge to a project, and they can often help the team to build relationships with local community members. For example, the group of Tuscarora beadworkers that visited the ROM in June 1996 came in connection with preparations for the exhibit "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquoian Life."[6] This visit happened because their community was represented on the curatorial team for the exhibit. The beadworkers spoke with the curators, gave interviews, and also created special works that formed a critical part of the exhibition. Another curator on this project came from the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, near Montréal. Tours of collections at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the McCord Museum of Canadian History were arranged for Kahnawake beadworkers, and they too provided information and new works for the exhibition. The Kahnawake curator also helped to arrange permission to include the magnificent Two Dog wampum belt from Kahnesatà:ke (Oka) in the exhibition. The result of this collaboration is an exhibit that is rich, multifaceted, and relevant to both Iroquoian and non-Iroquoian people.[7]

The ROM has benefited from collaborations with two First Nations communities in the creation of exhibitions using its collections. "Káxláya Gvi´ílás" (The ones who uphold the laws of our ancestors) was an exhibition based on a collection of nineteenth-century artifacts at the ROM plus new works by contemporary Heiltsuk artists. The interpretive approach in this exhibition directly reflected the Heiltsuk perspective. While this exhibition was on view in Toronto, eleven nineteenth-century pieces were also displayed in the Heiltsuk community of Bella Bella in British Columbia.[8]

A second collaboration involved the ROM and the Woodland Cultural Centre at Brantford, Ontario, in a project to create an exhibition and publications about Oronhyatekha, M.D. (1841–1907), the Six Nations Mohawk whose career led him to the centre of the Victorian social and business world in Canada and England. During his long term as Supreme Chief Ranger of the Independent Order of Foresters (IOF), he created a museum based on his cultural and natural history collections from around the world. After his death the IOF donated the collection to the University of Toronto. It was subsequently transferred to the Royal Ontario Museum in 1911.[9]

Oronhyatekha also maintained his ties to the Iroquoian world, particularly to his wife's home community of Tyendinaga. He is well remembered at Six Nations and Tyendinaga, but the collection that came to the ROM does not represent his personal life. This part of the story has been the focus of research by the Woodland Cultural

Centre, which counts Six Nations and Tyendinaga among its supporting communities. As a result of this research, a more personal and better contextualized picture of Dr. Oronhyatekha has emerged. The exhibition "Mohawk Ideals, Victorian Values: Oronhyatekha, M.D." that is scheduled to open at the Woodland Cultural Centre in the summer of 2001 is based on the combined research of curators at both institutions. The exhibit will include pieces from the ROM collections as well as pieces from the communities of Six Nations and Tyendinaga. Neither institution could have accomplished the project as effectively working in isolation.

Funding

The need to maximize available and potential funding sources represents a significant challenge for cultural institutions. Collaborations can have financial advantages. Because members of the team for "Káxláya Gvi´ílás" came from both Canada and the United States, the project was able to take advantage of federal funding available in two countries. The "Museums West" consortium has also proven to be an effective fund raising group. The National Endowment for the Humanities grant that it received to produce "Powerful Images" (the largest given in the competition in which it was entered) was awarded largely because of the collaborative nature of the project.[10]

Orally-transmitted traditions are arguably part of expressive culture, and are therefore also relevant to the present discussion. This last example – involving oral traditions rather than visual material – also demonstrates the advantages of working in partnership with First Nations. The ROM has a collection of several dozen wax cylinder recordings, many of which are identified only by the numbers on the cardboard containers in which they are stored. The catalogue sheets that must have provided detailed information about the contents of the recordings are missing, and available records indicate only that the cylinders, as a group, contain Iroquoian speeches and songs (see Boyle 1900 and Cringan 1900).

In 1994 the ROM sent the cylinders to a professional lab to be cleaned and repaired and to have the information on them transferred to archival-quality audio tapes. One set of the audio tapes was placed at the Woodland Cultural Centre, and the ROM provided a small grant toward a project to prepare an inventory of the contents of the tapes. The Woodland Cultural Centre assembled a group of Iroquoian speakers from Six Nations who listened to the tapes and provided (often after some consultation over sections that were of poor recording quality) a description of their contents.[11] Ultimately we hope to have complete translations. This project represents a repatriation of significant early texts to the Iroquoian community. The ROM will be advised as to the appropriate use or restriction of the information the tapes contain. The point I wish to make here, however, is that the money the Museum provided for this project went a great deal further as part of a Woodland Cultural Centre project than it would have in Toronto. For example, the cost of bringing the Iroquoian speakers to Toronto would have added greatly to the funds required if the Royal Ontario Museum had attempted to proceed alone.

Practical necessity requires new, more open, and inclusive approaches to accessing and interpreting the artistic and cultural traditions of First Nations. The benefits of these new approaches go beyond the practical needs to maximize available and often scarce resources. Collaborations break up institutional and disciplinary isolation, increase the relevance of cultural institutions, and ultimately expand our understanding of cultural histories and processes.

Communication

Collaborations must be understood and supported at all levels of an institution. In the absence of shared objectives, collaborative efforts may be perceived as running counter to "appropriate" procedures, and ultimately face significant, internally-generated obstacles. Such problems are more likely to arise in large, diverse institutions than in institutions with a focused mandate. Agreements of understanding ratified by boards of trustees can serve as records of intent to work together. One example of such an agreement is the Memorandum of Understanding between the Woodland Cultural Centre and the Royal Ontario Museum (see appendix). This document, signed in 1998 and subsequently reaffirmed, has primarily served to make ROM board members more aware of First Nations interests and of collaborative research by curatorial staff from both institutions. Operationally it remains to be seen whether the Memorandum of Understanding will confer any advantages on the Woodland Cultural Center beyond those extended to other First Nations.

Finally, it is important that cultural institutions communicate clearly with their visitors. All the intra- and inter-institutional cooperation may count for little if the agreed interpretations are lost on visitors. Kenneth Hudson has reminded us that it is often no easy task to get members of the public to accept, or even acknowledge, new interpretations. "What one gets out of a museum depends largely on what one brings to it [and visitors] are not grateful to have [their existing] ideas disturbed or demolished" (Hudson 1991, 459). One obstacle in the attempt to introduce perspectives that dislodge the centrality of Western ways of thinking is the authority image fostered by the cultural institution itself. For example, generations of visitors have been taught to respect Western-centred distinctions of authentic and inauthentic. New interpretations seek to replace this simple dichotomy with multiple "authenticities," but can we take it for granted that visitors will appreciate such re-interpretations? Edward Bruner has explored the distinctly different meanings that "authenticity" may have for scholars, for cultural institutions and performers, and for visitors (1996). His work suggests that it is not a matter of whether or not visitors understand the perspectives of the others; the important fact is that a visitor's own perspective is of greater significance in that individual's life.

While there is no fail-safe recipe to assure success in communicating a message, at the very least we should not invite trouble by misleading visitors as to the content of our exhibitions. Clear statements within exhibition texts and honesty in marketing are essential. The role of inappropriate marketing in negative responses to two Canadian exhibitions – "The Spirit Sings" (1988) and "Into the Heart of Africa" (1989) – has been discussed by Ruth B. Phillips (1990) and Shelley Butler (1999), respectively. All too often marketing schemes either err on the side of promising more comprehensive content or cater to commonly held stereotypes in an attempt to lure visitors. It is little wonder that visitors question the good intentions if not the authority of the institution.

In conclusion, I offer an example of what I consider to be clear, realistic statements to visitors about the representation of Native American art. A recent exhibition at the Berlin Museum of Ethnology, entitled "North American Indians: From Myth to Modernity," began with a display of stereotypical images as a way of confronting common misinformation about the indigenous peoples of North America. The next section provided information about Native peoples today and also explained the meaning and use of academic categories, particularly "culture areas." The core of the exhibition was comprised of spectacular pieces from the Museum's historic Northeast, Plains, Southwest, North West Coast, and Arctic collections. Interpretation included information about collectors and biographical details about many of the Native peoples represented in the paintings, photographs and objects in the exhibition. In the concluding section, entitled "Modern Indian Art," the visitor was treated to some of the best contemporary artwork, mainly by Native artists from the United States. The introductory text placed these works in historical context and told the visitor what the contemporary collection at the museum actually represented:

> *The collection of modern art at the Berlin Museum of Ethnology is still incomplete and unevenly weighted. The pictures acquired from the Southwest in the 1970s were mainly intended as illustrations of kachinas and other traditional ceremonies.*
>
> *But in 1989 a small collection of modern paintings was bought, and this has been extended over the past few years. The next*

> *task will be to add to the collection, so that the major styles and innovations are represented.*
>
> *The collection of contemporary, non-European art at the Museum of Ethnology is still strongly debated. But European art museums do not consider it their responsibility, as a result ethnological museums are the only ones in Europe to provide a place for modern ethnic art.*[12]

There were no promises, either implied or stated, that the museum was attempting a comprehensive representation of Native aesthetic traditions in North America. The exhibit did not attempt to use the historic collections to reconstruct cultural overviews, although it did provide a wealth of ethnographic context for the objects and images on view. They were quite careful to explain what they have, what it means, and – by addressing stereotypes and limitations – what it doesn't mean. It was still a spectacular, informative exhibition.

We have the potential to create equally spectacular and informative exhibitions on this side of the Atlantic. Given the possibilities for continuous intensive collaborations with Native artists, scholars, and communities, North American institutions have the opportunity to contribute to new directions in art history.and, ideally, to expand understanding on the part of visitors who encounter our exhibitions.

Appendix

Text of Memorandum of Understanding between the Woodland Cultural Centre and the Royal Ontario Museum.

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) and the Woodland Cultural Centre (WCC) recognize that in an environment in which dramatic changes are taking place, and given the "Principles to Establish Partnerships between First Peoples and Canadian Museums" in *The Task Force Report on Museums and the First Peoples* (*Section* IV), issued jointly by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museum Association and endorsed by the Board of Trustees of the Royal Ontario Museum and the Board of Governors of the Woodland Cultural Centre, there is a need to broaden our dialogue and to encourage and strengthen our ongoing relationship. Both parties recognize that they can learn from each other and that there are considerable benefits to be gained from working together, which will lead to mutual respect, trust and understanding.

Accordingly, the following principles are agreed:

1. Representatives of the parties agree to meet at least annually to review and discuss projects, exhibits, and research on matters relating to First Nations communities represented by the WCC. First Nations projects of general interest, but not specifically related to communities represented by the WCC, may also be included on the agenda for information purposes.

2. For any specific projects and initiatives on which the WCC and the ROM agree, the two parties will be equally involved in the development of principles and funding programs specific to the projects.

3. For joint projects and initiatives agreed to by the WCC and the ROM, both parties will contribute, to the extent reasonable and practicable, to the processes of planning, research, implementation, presentation, maintenance and marketing.

4. Specific projects, exhibits or research undertaken jointly by the ROM and the WCC will be co-managed on a basis of consensus.

5. The ROM accepts the principle that the First Nations will be speaking for themselves about their culture, heritage and history, and the contemporary existence of First Nations peoples.

6. Collaborative projects that are undertaken will acknowledge both the conceptual knowledge of First Nations and the empirical knowledge and approach of academically trained workers. These knowledge bases will be taken into account in research, documentation, presentation, promotion and education of various publics, including museum professionals and academics, in projects concerning the First Nations.

7. Interpretation or representation of information relating to joint projects will conform to an ethic of responsibility to the First Nations community representee, as well as to scholarly and professional standards of the academic and museum communities.

8. The WCC and the ROM acknowledge that this Memorandum or Understanding does not commit and [sic] party to any specific program, initiative or project.

SIGNED, Ist June 1998, by Director and President of ROM and Executive Director of the WCC.

Notes

1. Terms such as First Nations, North American Aboriginal people, and Native people are used as synonyms.
2. For an appreciation of these diverse opinions, compare Robert Houle's 1982 essay, The Emergence of a New Aesthetic Tradition, with artists' statements in *The Art of the Anishnawbek: Three Perspectives* (Angeconeb 1996).
3. *The Three Graces*, by Antonio Canova (1757-1922), was commissioned by the 6th Duke of Bedford in 1814 for a sculpture gallery at Woburn Abbey, and is considered to be one of the more important works of sculpture in Britain. After the sculpture was sold from Woburn in 1986, there was a long campaign to keep this sculpture in Britain. The work was eventually purchased under a joint arrangement between the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Galleries of Scotland.
4. The member institutions are: National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming; Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indianapolis, Indiana; Autry Museum of Western Heritage, Los Angeles, California; Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta; Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona; The Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma; National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson, Wyoming; Rockwell Museum, Corning, New York; Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.
5. For a more extensive discussion of options see the discussion on repatriation in Task Force on Museums and First Peoples (1992, 8-9).
6. The curatorial team for this exhibition consisted of Moira McCaffrey, director, Curatorial and Research Services, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montréal; Kate Koperski, curator of folk arts, Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Niagara Falls, New York; Kanatakta, executive director, Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center, Kahnawake, via Québec; Trudy Nicks, senior curator, Department of Anthropology, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; Jolene Rickard, Tuscarora artist and assistant professor, University of Buffalo; Ruth B. Phillips, director, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. The McCord Museum and the Castellani Art Museum were the co-ordinating institutions for Canada and the United States.
7. The exhibition opened at the McCord Museum in Montréal in June 1999 and at the Castellani Art Museum in Niagara Falls, New York, in July 2000. Subsequent venues include the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, the Museum of the American Indian in New York, and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull.
8. Both exhibitions were co-curated by Pam Brown, a member of the Bella Bella community and a curator at the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology and Martha Black, a curator at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, British Columbia. The nineteenth-century collection is described and contextualized in Black 1997.
9. For further details on Dr. Oronhyatekha and his collection see Nicks 1996.
10. Personal communication from Gerald Conaty, curator of anthropology, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta.
11. A brief description of the project, and a picture of the translators, appears in the April 1995 issue of *Wadrihwa*, the quarterly newsletter of the Woodland Cultural Centre.

12. Wall text for the exhibition "North American Indians: From Myth to Modernity" at the Berlin Museum of Ethnology. The exhibition opened 25 November 1999 and a catalogue was published. See Bolz and Sanner 1999.

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The Cunningham Collection of Haida Argillite at the Art Gallery of Ontario

Robin K. Wright

Two years ago, I visited the Art Gallery of Ontario to consult on its collection of fifty small argillite model poles carved in the late nineteenth century by two Haida artists, Charles Edenshaw and Isaac Chapman. My contribution was to confirm the attributions – who carved which poles – and to provide some historical background information on the artists. Thirty-one of the poles are attributed to Isaac Chapman, and nineteen are attributed to Charles Edenshaw. Some of my comments were recorded on audio tape, and I understand that they have been incorporated into the interpretive material now being exhibited (figs. 3, 4). I do not recall what I said in that interview, and I have not had a chance to see the exhibit since it was completed, so I cannot comment on the outcome. The papers in this section focus on the issues of collection limitations and exploring realistic and practical alternatives to displaying only those objects that reside in a gallery's collection. The Haida argillite model poles at the Art Gallery of Ontario provide a good case study: because of the lack of related material in the gallery, this exhibit poses a danger of representing metonymically the whole of Northwest Coast art. In this paper I discuss the Cunningham collection and suggest possibilities for its interpretation within an art gallery setting. I argue that this collection could be interpreted in ways that might address a range of issues so as to engage the viewer and provide a broader understanding of Haida argillite carving and its place not only within Haida and Northwest Coast art history but also within a Canadian and a global art history. These issues include "traditional" art historical concepts such as connoisseurship, attribution, and iconography, and "new" art historical concepts such as cultural context, the "wrapping" of collection history, and the importance of the Native voice.

Because Haida argillite carving is an art form developed specifically for sale to outsiders during the nineteenth century, it falls into the category of tourist art, a category that has largely been excluded from art museums until recent years. In this volume, Ruth B. Phillips addresses the importance of including such objects in art galleries as "authentic" expressions of First Nations art. Her arguments present a compelling justification for the inclusion of the Cunningham argillite collection among the other works exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Also in this volume, Gerald McMaster discusses the importance of the 1927 "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern," organized by Marius Barbeau at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa – one of the first exhibitions to present the works of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists together in a gallery setting (fig. 1). That exhibition included a number of Haida argillite carvings, several of which were by Charles Edenshaw, but the catalogue does not specifically identify which pieces were his, although pieces by other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists are identified. The attribution of works of art to the hand of Charles Edenshaw has been a preoccupation of a number of twentieth-century art historians; this is a story that "wraps" this collection.

Charles Edenshaw, *da.a xiigang* (ca.1839–1920), the nephew of Albert Edward Edenshaw, chief of the *saangga.ahl 'laa'naas*, a branch of the *sdast'a.aas* Eagle clan, was famous as an artist during his own lifetime. He was recognized both by the Haida people and by collectors and anthropologists as one of the most accomplished Haida artists, and more than a century later, he continues to be the most well-known late nineteenth-century Haida artist. He was born during a period when Haida culture was flourishing both economically and artistically, spurred by increased wealth brought by the European and Euro-American fur trade. Around 1873, he married *qwii.aang* (Isabella Edenshaw) of the *yahgu 'laanaas* Raven clan. The couple had survived the periods of the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1862 and the later missionization and colonization by Euro-Canadians. By the time they were given the name Edenshaw (anglicized from *7idansuu*) as a surname at their baptism and Christian marriage ceremony in 1885, potlatching had been outlawed in Canada, and much of the social and ceremonial role that had accompanied that name in the past had been forbidden and suppressed by missionaries and government agents. In fact, rather than taking the name Edenshaw (*7idansuu*) after the death of his uncle – at a memorial potlatch – Charles was given the name by a missionary on the occasion of his baptism, while his uncle was still alive. Charles raised no full-sized totem poles after this time, as this activity was not allowed, but he carved many miniature poles for sale to anthropologists, dealers, and tourists. He worked as an artist well into the twentieth century, developing a personal style that is renowned both for its originality and innovative narrative forms, and for its adherence to the sophisticated formline design principles that characterize Haida art. His fame during his lifetime arose from his own lineage and his talent as an artist, as well as his relationship with missionaries, government agents, the anthropologists Franz Boas and John Swanton, and collectors such as C. F. Newcombe, James G. Swan, and George T. Emmons.[1]

All fifty model poles in the Art Gallery of Ontario's collection were part of an argillite collection acquired in the 1890s by Robert Cunningham at his trading post in Port Essington, a small community at the mouth of the Skeena River on the mainland of northern British Columbia, directly east of the Haida village of Massett on Haida Gwaii, the Queen Charlotte Islands. Robert Cunningham (1837–1905) was a Scottish-born missionary turned fur trader and Haida art dealer. His wife was a Tsimshian woman, the sister of the wife of 7*wii.aa*, the town chief at Massett. The Cunninghams purchased and sold a large quantity of Haida art – primarily art forms that were made for sale: argillite carvings and basketry. Their son George Cunningham carried on the business in the twentieth century. The Cunningham argillite collection was eventually sold to Roy Cole, a private collector, who donated a portion of it to the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1997.

George Cunningham promoted art works not only by Charles and Isabella Edenshaw, but also by one Isaac Chapman (ca. 1880–1907). In the process he indulged in a bit of marketing strategy that confused the record about the younger Chapman. Much misinformation has been published about a so-called "rivalry" between Charles Edenshaw and Isaac Chapman. This story began as a fanciful label written by George Cunningham to advertise the Cunningham collection of argillite carvings (Barbeau 1957, 181). Barbeau recorded a portion of this label:

> *The history of Chapman is as pathetic as it is entrancing. In one of the intertribal wars of the last century, his parents, who belonged to the Bella Bella tribe, were captured by the Haidas, that war-like nation known as the Vikings of the Pacific. Young Chapman was born while his parents were in captivity, and his family, after a prolonged association with their conquerors, preferred to remain on the island after they were freed rather than go back to the mainland. The boy, a cripple and an alien, grew up at Massett, and made friends around him. At a very early age he displayed a precocious ability as a carver, using rude tools of bone and shell manufactured by himself, but he died before reaching his thirtieth year. His skill was such, however, that in his numerous carvings he produced some of the choicest samples of the art as preserved in this collection . . .*
>
> *Mr. Cunningham [the father] first met Charlie Edensaw, then a comparatively young man, at the time when he [Cunningham] was travelling on a lumber schooner that called at Massett, an Indian village near the northeast end of the Queen Charlotte Islands. This meeting ripened into friendship, and during*

> *subsequent visits the white man had the opportunity to observe the work of the chief and of the crippled boy, the son of a slave.*
>
> *Competition seems to have existed between the chief and the cripple, the chief holding himself above any recognition of the poor alien lad, never addressing him directly, and unable to check his pride and jealousy ... When the chief, later, visited Cunningham and could not help noticing some of Chapman's carvings in the trader's possession, he proudly dismissed them with the remark, "This may be all very good, but I will show you something better," and he would proceed to carve, on the spot, a new and finer piece, illustrating his own family story.*
>
> *The most highly prized of the totems passed from the hands of Charlie Edensaw to Cunningham senior at such a moment of pique. It turned out to be a genealogical tree of the Edensaw family, and Edensaw was known to concentrate upon the history of his own clan.*
>
> Barbeau (1957, 180–81)

The first exhibit in Canada that featured Charles Edenshaw's work as "fine art" and named him as an artist alongside such Canadian artists as Emily Carr, Paul Kane, and A.Y. Jackson was the 1927 "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern," which was mounted at the National Gallery of Canada (Barbeau 1957, 181).[2] The small catalogue of this exhibit does not list individual pieces by Haida artists, but mentions only "No. 112. Slate Carvings"; the text reports "Many of the best pieces of this kind are the work of the famous Haida chief, Edenshaw, and his faithful Tlingit slave."[3] The "Tlingit slave" must refer to George Cunningham's myth about Isaac Chapman, and it confuses Chapman's tribal affiliation even further. This was the first of many repetitions of the spurious "slave" story (Harrington 1949, 201).

Barbeau discovered the extreme inaccuracy of this story after interviewing several people in Massett who knew Chapman's identity. In his 1957 publication, *Haida Carvers in Argillite*, Barbeau pointed out that Isaac Chapman was not a slave, but a member of a Haida eagle clan. Barbeau's information came from Peter Hill, Alfred Adams, and Edward Russ of Massett, but Barbeau confused their comments about Chapman's parents; he correctly reports that Isaac Chapman was adopted by Benjamin Bennett and also went by the name Ben Bennett, and that Isaac's true father was James Sykes, a chief of the *kuna'laanaas* at *hl7yaalang*. Barbeau later identified Chapman's true father as Kwaiwas, a leading chief of the *yahgu 'laanaas* Ravens, but perhaps he was referring to the adoptive father (Barbeau 1957, 180).

According to another account Barbeau received from Andrew Brown, Chapman's father was a white person. Recent research into the genealogy of Isaac Chapman has revealed more about his family relationships.

We know from information given to Barbeau by Peter Hill that Isaac Chapman was not a slave, but that he was crippled. His Haida name was *skilee* (also spelled Skillai, Skelai, Skelay, or Skilé), and he was the son of James Sykes, a chief of the *kuna'laanaas* from *hl7yaalang* village who occupied a high place at the end of the village (Barbeau Papers). Barbeau suggests that Chapman and Edenshaw may have been distant relatives, but Peter Hill denied this, saying they were of different tribes. According to an account by Edward Russ, *skilee*'s birth mother was *jast'aalans* (Nellie, born 1871) of the *du.ugwaa tsiij git'anee* Eagles, and that *skilee* was her oldest boy. *Jast'aalans*, gave *skilee* to her sister, *jaskilaas* (Eileen or Ellen?) who, with her husband Ben Bennett, adopted him. Eileen and Ben Bennett also adopted Alice (Isaac Chapman's half-sister). Ben Bennett later changed his name to Chapman, and it was then that *skilee* took the name Isaac Chapman. Given the matrilineal descent system of the Haida, Isaac Chapman would have belonged to the same clan as his mother and her sister.

We also know that Isaac Chapman came from a family of carvers; Edward Russ gives a long account of the carving of one of the first totem poles at the village of *yaan* (Yan), which he attributes to a man named Oti wans (*ruud 7iw7waans*), who was *jast'aalans'* uncle. The house that Oti wans built at *yaan* was named *na k'udang qins*; this house was listed as "house no. 14, Na k!o'dAn qens" by Swanton (Swanton 1905, 292) and "house no. 11" by MacDonald (1983, 167). According to Swanton, standing out in front of this house was a carved block of wood (which in old times took the place of the house pole) that bore the beak of a bird; Swanton identified the owner of the house as *sdiihldaa* (Sti'łta, "returned") of the *tuuhlk'aa git'anee* [E16]. MacDonald suggests that this ancient-style frontal house pole was also on the predecessor of a house in a different village.

According to Russ, *skilee* was born ca. 1880, and died ca. 1907. He started carving argillite poles when his uncle O*ti wans* was still alive. Russ also told Barbeau that *skilee* was healthy when he was born, but injured one leg as a child and used two canes to walk. He also had a touch of tuberculosis. His boat capsized near North (Langara) Island, where he was fishing, and he never recovered from having been in the cold water for about twenty minutes. He was sick in bed for two years before he died (Barbeau papers).

While Barbeau did clarify the fictitious nature of the Cunningham story about Isaac Chapman, he also mis-attributed several of Charles Edenshaw's argillite model poles to Isaac Chapman (Barbeau 1957, 179–99), thus totally confusing the record on

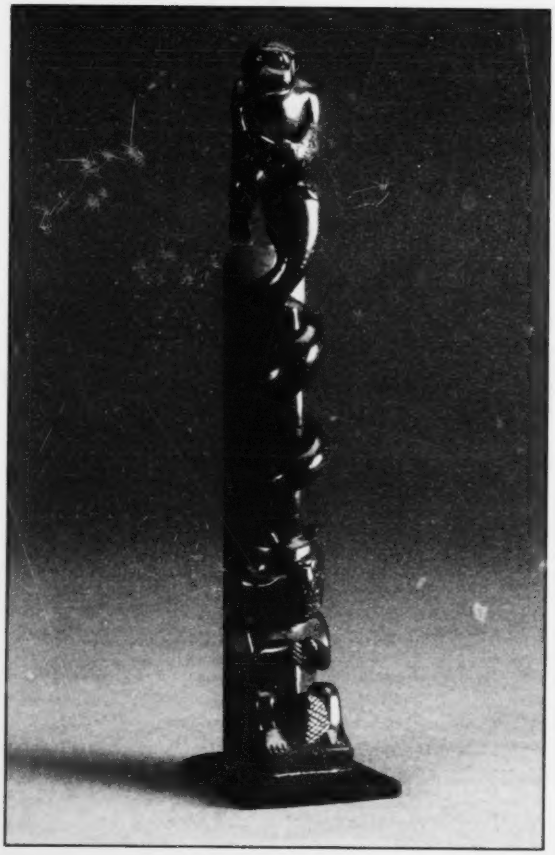
Chapman's carving style. Of the thirty-seven argillite poles that Barbeau attributed to Isaac Chapman, eighteen can now be attributed to Charles Edenshaw.[4] Several of these poles are now in the Art Gallery of Ontario collection, where we have the opportunity to closely compare the two artists' work.

Charles Edenshaw's style of carving has been described in detail by Bill Holm, who pointed out the importance of the eyesocket area in determining individual style. Edenshaw's eyes feature a round iris enclosed in open, tapered lids; the points of the lids are not dropped much below the center of the eye. Below the eye, the upper cheek plane intersects the eye orb immediately below the lower eyelid line, with no hollowing of the socket below the eye, except for the recessed definition of the eyelid line. The formlines are rounded and medium weight, and the formline Us are frequently arranged in a stacked-U complex (Holm 1981, 181–9). In contrast to Edenshaw's elaborate formline complexes, Chapman's argillite poles are almost entirely devoid of formline details. Chapman's eye sockets are more shallowly carved than Edenshaw's and the iris takes up a larger portion of the space within the eyesocket area. Chapman's work can easily be distinguished from Edenshaw's by his consistent use of a deep compass point in the center of each eye and his frequent use of dashing and stippling in place of formline designs on wings. His marked separation of the figures on the poles also differs from Edenshaw's interlocked compositions.

Chapman, who was at least forty years younger than Edenshaw, was said to have hung around Edenshaw and learned from him in Massett, copying some of his argillite poles. A comparison of their work, however, shows that Chapman was unquestionably the less accomplished carver. Any suggestion that his work was truly as skilled as Edenshaw's must surely arise from the mis-attributions made by Barbeau. The motifs depicted on poles by Edenshaw and Chapman suggest that the younger Chapman was indeed influenced by Edenshaw's work. One of Chapman's poles has a human figure above a snake that is wrapped around the *sgil* (hat rings) above the head of a beaver at the base of the pole (fig. 27). The beaver was a crest of both Charles Edenshaw's *saangga.ahl 'laanaas* and Isaac Chapman's *du.ugwaa tsiij git'anee* Eagle clans, and Charles used this design on his own personal cane as well as on several of the argillite model poles in the Art Gallery of Ontario collection (Hoover 1995, 46–8; fig. 28). The snake is similar to those Charles Edenshaw carved on the shafts of several canes; one of these canes is in the Royal Ontario Museum (fig. 29) and might be borrowed to illustrate this connection.

James G. Swan reported that Edenshaw derived this snake motif from an illustration of the Greek mythological Laocoön in the *Illustrated London News* (fig. 30), which he had tacked on the wall of his house. The elephant mentioned below also appeared in the *Illustrated London News* in a report of P. T. Barnam's purchase of Jumbo the Elephant from the London Zoo in 1882 (fig. 31).

Figure 27
Issac Chapman (attrib. to), *Model Totem Pole*, ca.1885–ca.1905. Argillite, 15.9 x 3.5 x 3.7 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; gift of Roy G. Cole, Rousseau, Ontario, 1997, acc. no. 97/175.2. The motifs depicted on poles by Edenshaw and Chapman suggest that the younger Chapman was influenced by Edenshaw's work. This pole has a human figure above a snake that is wrapped around the *sgil* (hat rings) above the head of a beaver at the base of the pole. Photograph: Art Gallery of Ontario.



> *He showed me two beautiful canes nearly finished, each representing a serpent twined around the stick which was a crab apple sapling, two inches in diameter with the serpent of life size around it, on the top of one was a clinched fist holding a stick and the other was an elephants head, both were carved in walrus tooth ivory. I found on questioning Charley that he got the idea from a London Pictorial newspaper which he showed me. The clinched fist was from Laoccoon [sic] grasping a serpent and the elephant, was from a picture of Barnums Jumbo, representing the hoisting on board a steamer when bound to New York [. U]nderneath each ivory carving was a silver band around the cane, elaborately carved with Indian devices.*
>
> (Swan 1883, 23)

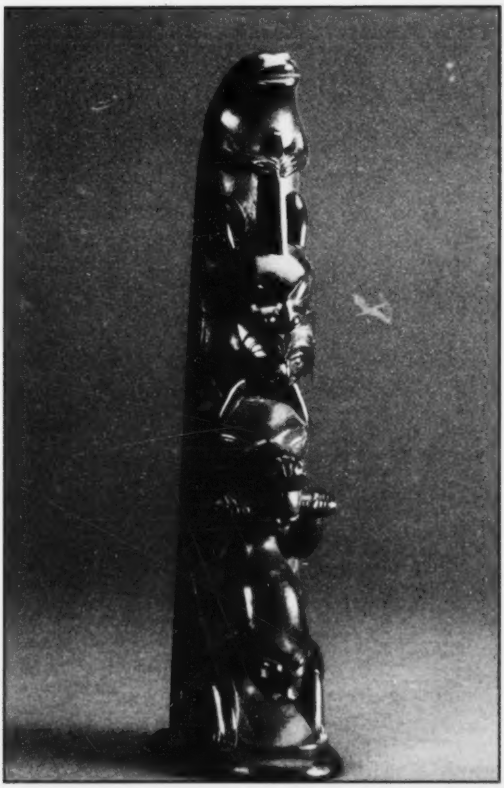


Figure 28
Charles Edenshaw (attrib. to), *Model Totem Pole*, ca.1890–ca.1905. Argillite 21.0 x 4.7 x 5.8 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; gift of Roy G. Cole, Rosseau, Ontario, 1997, acc. no. 97/175.35. A beaver is depicted on this pole. The beaver was a crest of both Charles Edenshaw's *saangga.ahl 'laanaas* and Isaac Chapman's *du.ugwaa tsiij git'anee* Eagle clans. Photograph: Art Gallery of Ontario.

Swan collected both of these canes. He retained the clenched fist cane in his own collection (now in the Jefferson County Museum in Port Townsend) and gave the elephant cane to his brother. This cane later went to the American Museum of Natural History (cat. no. 16 / 737), but the elephant handle is now in the Royal British Columbia Museum (cat. no. 16471; Blackman and Hall Jr. 1982, 32). The fact that both classical Greek mythology and current events were part of the Haida repertoire in the 1880s and 1890s further illustrates the global context within which Haida art can be viewed and understood. A graphic image of the Laocoön illustration, along with the loan of the Edenshaw cane from the Royal Ontario Museum would add an interesting dimension to the interpretation of Chapman's model pole in the art gallery setting.

The Art Gallery of Ontario's interpretation of the Cunningham collection includes an audio recording of the commentary of Robert Davidson, the great-grandson of Charles Edenshaw. Further interpretation of this collection of fifty poles should include their relevance to the Haida people today, and the voices of the clan relatives of both Chapman and Edenshaw. New full-sized poles are being carved and raised in Massett today; photographic documentation of these contemporary poles would

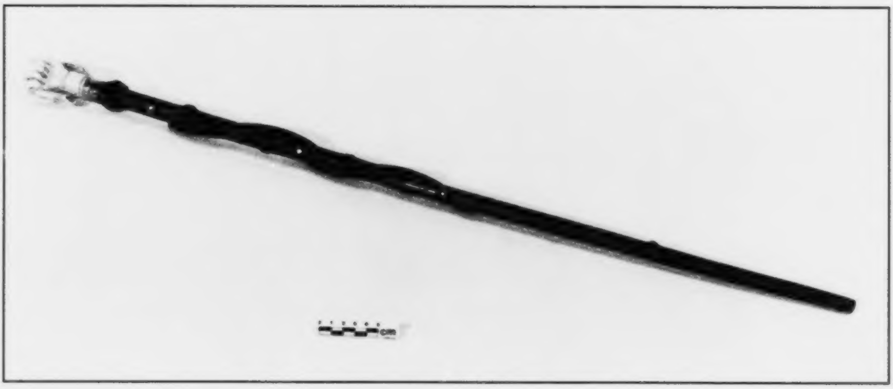


Figure 29
Charles Edenshaw, *Cane*.Yew, ivory. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, acc. no. 924.36.11. Handle of a human hand grasping a snake. The snake motif depicted on poles by Issac Chapman is similar to those carved by Charles Edenshaw on the shafts of several canes, including this one. Photograph: Royal Ontario Museum.

add significantly to the story that the small models can tell. A memorial pole carved by Jim Hart and raised in the fall of 1999 by him in memory of his uncle, Morris White, represents the continuation of the pole carving tradition by the current holder of the name 7*idansuu*. Chapman and Edenshaw, along with many other Haida artists and their descendants, kept the tradition of pole carving alive in miniature during a period when full-sized poles could not be carved. These artists provide a link between the great pole carvers of the past and the Haida people today.

George Cunningham's deliberate mis-identification of Isaac Chapman as Edenshaw's slave was a marketing ploy not unlike Abe Cohen's marketing of Louisa Keyser as an "Indian Princess" (Cohodas 1992). The mis-attribution of many Edenshaw poles as the work of Isaac Chapman by Marius Barbeau has only recently been revised. Information on both of these wrappings and unwrappings would tell the story of these poles in the art market and collector worlds. Information on the iconographic sources for the motifs on the poles (ranging from Haida crest figures and family histories to exotic sources such as the Laocoön and Jumbo the elephant) could engage, entertain, and inform the visiting public about the global environment and cultural context within which nineteenth-century Haida artists worked. Finally, by linking these model argillite poles to examples of work by the present generation of Haida carvers, the Art Gallery of Ontario could tell a complex story that would give voice to the Haida people who have inherited a cultural legacy through their artist ancestors.

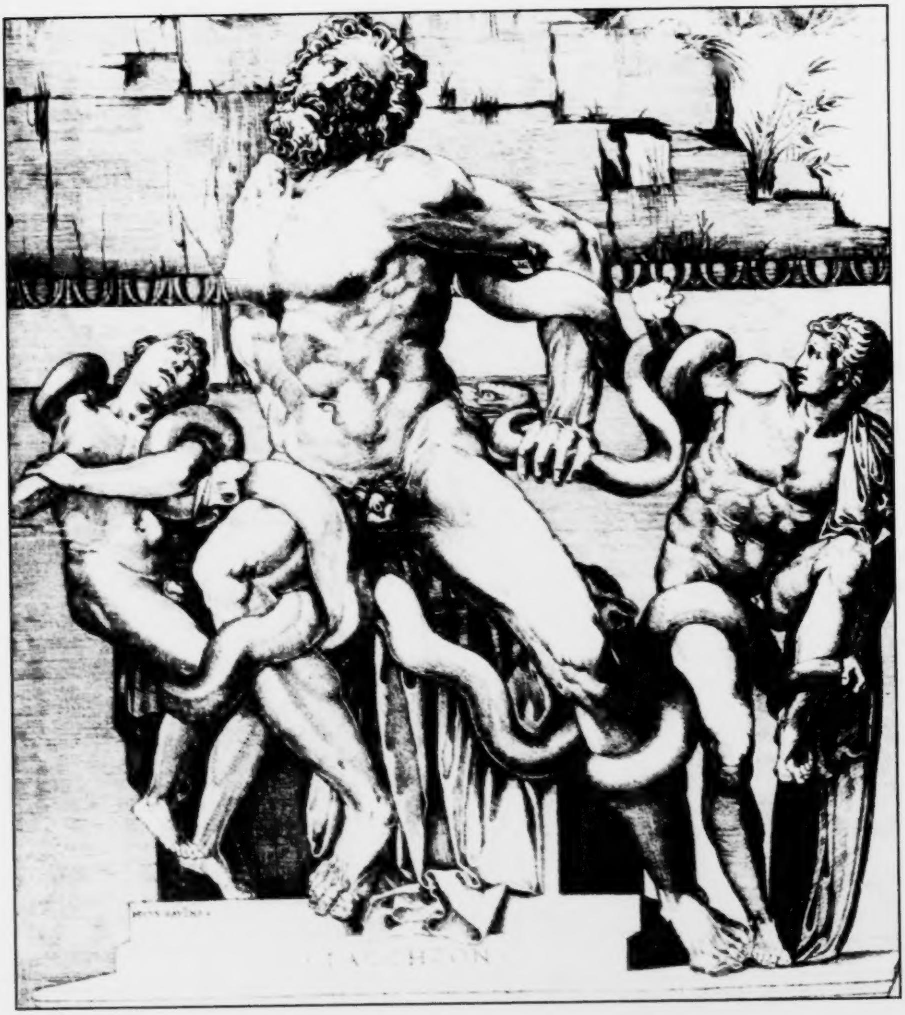


Figure 30
Laocoön and his sons. Engraving by Marco Dente (d. 1527). James G. Swan reported that Edenshaw derived his snake motif from an illustration of the Greek mythological Laocoön in the *Illustrated London News*, which he had tacked on the wall of his house.

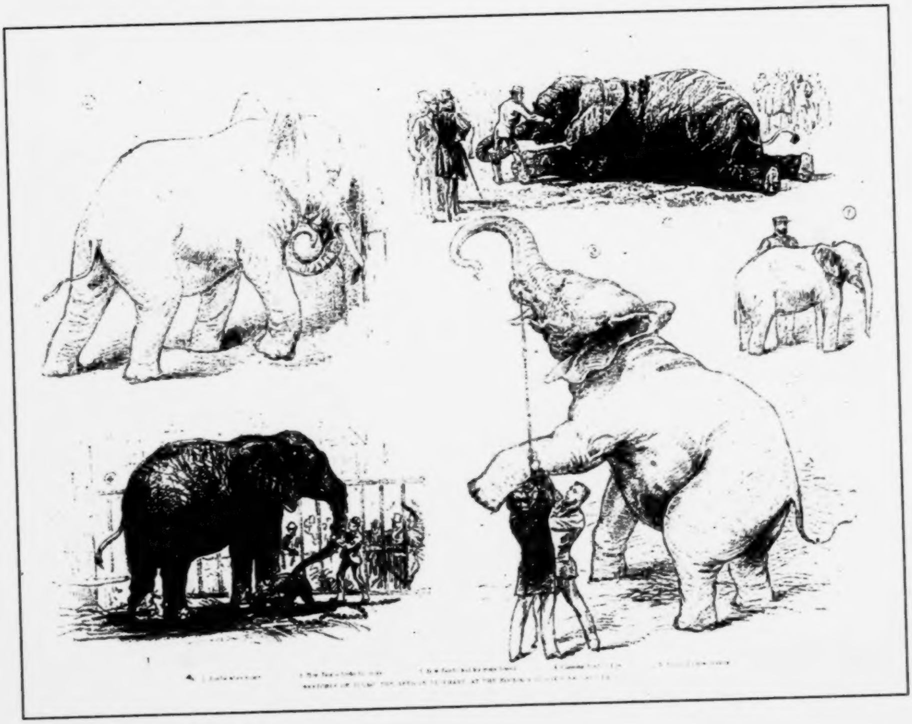


Figure 31
Sketches of Jumbo. Illustrated London News, 23 February 1882. James G. Swan reported that Edenshaw derived the elephant motif on the top of one of his canes from these sketches, which accompanied a report of P. T. Barnam's purchase of Jumbo the Elephant from the London Zoo in 1882. Photograph: Robin K. Wright.

Notes

1. In a letter to Boas written at Massett, Swanton described Edenshaw as "the best carver here" (Swanton 1901). Writing in 1902, Newcombe said Edenshaw was "the best carver in wood and stone now living" (quoted in Cole 1985, 195). In his 1927 book *Primitive Art*, Boas reported Edenshaw was "the best carver and painter among the Haida" (Boas 1955, 212).
2. The "Exposition d'art canadien" held earlier the same year at Le Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris also featured some of Edenshaw's argillite carvings along with paintings by the Euro-Canadian Group of Seven (Leslie Dawn, personal communication, March 2000).
3. In this exhibit, the Euro-Canadians were called "Canadian artists" and listed separately at the back with the titles of their works. The First Nations artist, Frederick Alexee, the only Native artist associated with specific works, was described as "an old Tsimshian half-breed from Port Simpson," and his pieces, which were described as "primitive

paintings," were listed with explanatory descriptions (see *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern*, 1927).

4. Figs. 184, 187, 188, 189, 191, 192, 194, 197, 198, 199, 203, 208 (right), 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215. (For details see Barbeau 1957, 179-99.)

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After Essay – What's the Story?

Lynn A. Hill

One of the pivotal issues informing discussion in the session "Depending on Donations: Displaying What's in the Collection" was the absence of a First Nations voice within the history of art making in Canada. When we begin to take a closer look at the collections of institutions such as the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG), it becomes apparent that although the majority of these collections are historical in nature, there is often little or no First Nations content or context. Both the AGO and the VAG have small collections of historical objects created by First Nations people but these holdings are not representative. It is ironic that although the holdings of these institutions have a strong regional emphasis and although each gallery is situated within well-documented and studied geographical groups of First Nations – the Eastern Woodlands and the Northwest Coast respectively – neither has a collection that is representative of these peoples. Jeff Thomas asked the obvious question, "How can you have a gallery devoted to Canadian history and not have a place where the First Peoples story is told from their perspective?" Unfortunately, the answer is not easy and the issue is bigger than we imagine.

The history of the museum lies at the foundation of this issue. Museums represent a complicated concept, ranging from the Renaissance notion of a cabinet of curiosities filled with exotic objects for private reflection and pleasure to the modern disciplinary museum catering to the general public's desire for "edutainment." Curator Carol Podedworny reminded us of how the situation of objects changes when they become a part of a museum collection and the effects of this change on issues of identity and culture. Following Tony Bennett (1995, 17–105), she reiterated:

> *Museums define the relations of cultures to one another through an evolutionary, linear narrative which posits the imperial powers of the West at the apex of the narrative and non-Western cultures at the bottom, buried in the past.*

> *Exhibitions and museums create man as both the object and subject of knowledge; he is both the person doing the looking and is the person on the evolutionary chronology who is being examined. So the view being projected by the museum to the viewer is one that states, "I reside at the apex of civilization." There is also a sense that when the modern public museum came into being, objects began to be seen as representative as opposed to unique; they became examples of general rules and laws. And we should also take into account the significance of what is selected and by whom. When the object comes into the institution it becomes legitimized, and so we have to ask ourselves: "who is the right person to select from a culture what is to be legitimized in that museum?"*

The expectations we have of museums and the way we view them may have changed over the past centuries, but have we broken out of that glass-case mentality when it comes to First Nations material culture?

The Object of Their Affection: Collecting First Peoples Material Culture

The idea of collecting objects from First Nations people began with the early explorers who often took back evidence of riches found during their travels. Many of these objects were valued for their potential for economic exploitation but they soon came to be admired as exotic curiosities as well. Visitors to this country often collected cultural material according to their personal interests and tastes. As time went on, these objects found their way into museum collections around the world. These institutions not only sanctioned the objects, but also created a false sense of Native culture by evaluating them according to Western European standards of quality and notions of connoisseurship. Aside from their aesthetic and exotic qualities First Nations objects were also collected as tools for cross-cultural studies. Such cultural studies lead to collecting informed by what has been called "the salvage paradigm" – a philosophy of collecting that privileged and valued objects "saved" from what were seen as disappearing cultures. The resulting collections suggested that Native cultures were suspended outside of historical time, unchanging amidst the world around them.

During the last half of the nineteenth century there was a general belief that the North American Indian was on the brink of extinction. Anthropologists and ethnographers scrambled to collect the remnants of what they thought was the last of a dying race. It was at this time that most of the material culture you see in museums today was salvaged/savaged from its home communities. Colonialist attitudes toward collecting non-Western material culture are still evident today. Take a look at any early-American auction-house catalogue and you will see that the desire to own these historic objects remains an obsession.

Realities

Two views were presented on the inclusion of a First Nations perspective or voice in an established art gallery collection that contains few Native works. Jeff Thomas and Anna Hudson suggested an exhibit organized around art created by non-Natives in which the Natives are the subject. Trudy Nicks and Robin K. Wright suggested exhibits based on historical Native art in the art gallery setting, based either on historical material already in the gallery's collection or material on loan from museums or other institutions. The panelists provided ideas and shared past institutional experiences on this issue, but the pattern of the questions that ensued resembled a sad lover's waltz – two steps forward and one step back.

How do you include a First Nations perspective in a collection of works by non-Native artists where the subjects are often First Nations people? Indians were popular subjects for many non-Native artists who came to experience the wild, rugged Canadian landscape; today they are still regarded by the non-Native exhibition-going public as a "natural subject" for settler artists precisely because the pictures these artists made often present Native peoples in stereotypical ways. The more well-known artists include Edmund Morris, Paul Kane, Cornelius Krieghoff, Emily Carr, and members of the Group of Seven. Both the AGO and the VAG hold examples of works by these artists in their collections of Canadian historical art. Anna Hudson and Jeff Thomas raised the issue of how these works relate to First Nations people during the time period in which they were painted. Hudson and Thomas outlined a proposal for an exhibit based on the Edmund Morris works held by the AGO. Their idea was to insert a First Nations historical perspective through the use of documentation, photographs, and objects, supplemented with contemporary portraits by First Nations artists, so as to engage the visiting public in a dialogue about cultural narratives. Although integration of contemporary First Nations and historical non-Native works sounds viable and practical, it raises a cautionary yellow flag. Does this type of intervention merely justify one over the other? What is the link between the historical and the contemporary works? How can we extract a First Nations context from these varying historical perspectives?

Situating First Nations historical work in the art gallery context introduces a number of issues relating to the display of isolated Native works in predominantly Euro-Canadian art collections. Robin Wright suggested ways of interpreting the AGO collection of argillite model poles that would engage the viewer and provide a broader understanding of Haida argillite carving and its place, not only in Haida and Northwest Coast art history, but also in Canadian and global art history. She combined traditional Western connoisseurship with a consideration of cultural context – the object's history and surrounding documentation.

A question that comes to mind in this unwrapping of the objects concerns whether a non-Native audience will understand both the context within which these argillite poles were originally created, and the significance and importance of totem poles to the Haida. How can we convey these differences to the general public? How can we do justice to these argillite pieces and to contemporary Haida artists? These questions make it clear that the audience plays an important part in the development, design, and interpretation of exhibitions involving First Nations material culture. Institutionally speaking, how can we make sense of it all? Objects without context provide little or no insight into the past or present. Is it easier to silence these objects – by hiding them away in a vault or displaying them in overcrowded visible storage areas where their cultural relevance is lost in the shuffle – than it is to discuss them? How can we communicate what these objects are about to both a First Nations and non-First Nations audience?

What are the alternatives? Trudy Nicks gave several realistic and practical suggestions based on her experience as a museum curator and her involvement in collaborative projects with First Nations communities. She also recognized some of the problems involving institutional responsibility, Eurocentric perspectives, historical inaccuracies, spotty collections, incomplete or non-existent documentation, and inadequate communication and funding. One of the key areas addressed by Nicks was the issue of communication. Is the audience Native or non-Native, and what is the difference between these two audiences? How can education and entertainment be used to challenge the fundamental beliefs of non-Native audiences who do not expect to have their fundamental beliefs challenged during a visit to the art gallery? Why would First Nations people want to visit a place where someone else is telling their story? How can we strike a balance between the disparate needs and expectations of our audiences?

Both Debbie Sparrow and Jeff Thomas questioned how best to reach out to First Nations communities and inspire them to become involved. Partnerships with these communities are one way to foster what Nicks refers to as "shared authority" between the institution and the community. If there is shared authority then there is shared responsibility and ownership. Such partnerships should be established between Native peoples and the various levels of the institution: curatorial and educational departments, docents and volunteers, and the board of trustees. If institutions are going to exhibit First Nations works from their collections, they have a responsibility both to the First Nations people and to all their visitors to do it right. We have learned from past mistakes and, as a result, exhibitions are not what they used to be. A certain social and political awareness is making its presence known. And it's about time.

Problems

This session may have offered some viable and realistic solutions to the issues at hand, but once again the Indian has been kept in the past tense. By using the AGO and VAG as case studies we focused only on the historical or traditional objects in their collections. What about the contemporary works they hold? Are we saying that contemporary artists have no problems in being represented or situating themselves within these institutional collections? The AGO and the VAG may think so, but neither of their web sites mention a single First Nations contemporary artist. The works are there – where are they hiding them? If these institutions are really concerned about what is or is not in their collections, why were we not given a list of all the First Nations objects they hold? Talk about making the best of your collection – show us what you have!

This issue was never clearly addressed, but it demands attention. No wonder our contemporary artists have had such a struggle for recognition. The Indian has changed but has the institution? Beggars can't be choosers. If institutions want to have representative collections, they must actively develop and manage them through purchasing and/or commissioning works from the source. It is nice to host a novelty First Nations exhibition every now and then, but where is the ongoing commitment? Without ownership there is no responsibility. Contemporary artists strive to overcome institutional perceptions, stereotypes, and politics of representation. By placing the round peg into the square hole, First Nations artists have challenged differing historical perspectives, cultural and creative stereotypes, and the imposition of anthropological methodologies on their art and culture. The round peg fits the square, but what about the empty space that surrounds it? Let us look at what is missing. By examining the mechanics of collecting – who, what, where, when, and why – we can begin to understand some of the complexities involved in attempting to establish a representative collection or why one doesn't exist.

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Repositioning Inuit Art

The Anthropology of Inuit Art

A Problem for Art Historians

Shannon Bagg

Over the past several decades, a growing awareness of the cultural and ideological biases of art history has prompted more and more art historians to look beyond their discipline in order to find new strategies for interpreting artistic expression. Art historians who specialize in the artwork of non-Western cultures have, in this respect, increasingly drawn upon contemporary debates in anthropology both as a way of eliciting current ideas in studies on culture and as a means of negotiating the many problems involved in cross-cultural interpretation. Indeed, "interdisciplinary" has become something of a catch-phrase for art historians who study non-Western art, as have the terms "cultural relativism" and "field work." While discourses in anthropology appear to have made significant headway in the field of non-Western art history, the extent to which this has actually occurred deserves serious consideration.

Despite the fact that art historians have faced uncertainties about cross-cultural interpretation (in other words, faced "a crisis of representation"), the "right to write" art history has never been seriously in question.[1] That is, while "a crisis of representation" shook the very foundations of anthropology, forcing it into a state of extreme self-reflexivity, a similar "crisis of representation" was felt only in the margins of the art history discipline. As a result, art historians in so-called "marginal" fields such as non-Western art have been able to borrow from debates in anthropology while continuing to rely on established conventions of art history. To what extent is non-Western art history a form of anthropology? Is writing about art the same as writing about culture? Do art historians produce ethnographies of the cultures whose art they study? This paper will focus on current art historical practice in the Inuit art field in an attempt to grapple with these larger questions. First, the paper will examine how art historians of Inuit art have drawn on anthropological methods as a means of negotiating the pitfalls inherent in studies on culture. Second, it will review how Inuit culture has come to be presented and re-presented in the writings of art historians. A consideration of the "cultural content" of four recent texts on contemporary Inuit art will serve to demonstrate the extent to which Inuit art history has become a form of anthropology.

Anthropology has always played an important role in determining how art historians approach contemporary Inuit art. While art historical writing on the topic in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s was concerned with distancing Inuit art from the realm of "cultural production," and hence the domain of anthropology, more recently, art historians in the Inuit art field have looked to anthropology as a means of understanding the cultural experience behind contemporary Inuit art. In the late 1970s, as a response to the growing recognition among scholars in the social sciences and humanities in general that culture and environment necessarily affect ones understanding of the world, art historians began conducting "field work" in the North. Since that time, interviews with artists and other members of the Inuit art community have come to be increasingly important to the study of Inuit art history as the ability of art historians to offer authoritative or meaningful interpretations of contemporary Inuit art has been called into question.

Although the widespread use of artists' perspectives in exhibition panels and art history texts in the 1980s could be seen as a move toward a more anthropological style of writing in the Inuit art field, it was not until the early 1990s, when art historians began to use interview material to go beyond description and anecdote, that a distinctly anthropological mode of writing Inuit art history came into being (Bagg 1997a, 9). Responding to a heightened awareness toward the (mis)representation of other cultures by the West, art historians began to present the "Inuit" point of view in their analyses of Inuit art in a concerted effort to avoid imposing Western (or, more specifically, Euro-Canadian) assumptions about the nature of art onto the work of Inuit artists. For the most part, the approach has been championed as an effective strategy: Inuit are given a voice and with it, the power to influence how Inuit art is received. What has not yet been considered, however, is the quasi-ethnographic nature of such an approach.

Since the most extensive use of artists' perspectives has been made in the context of large-scale exhibitions of Inuit art, the following section will focus on four exhibition catalogues, arguably the most prominent texts on Inuit art of the last decade (Bagg 1997b, 22):[2] *Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing* (National Gallery of Canada); *Inuit Women Artists* (Canadian Museum of Civilization); *Qamanittuaq: Where the River Widens: Drawings by Baker Lake Artists* (MacDonald Stewart Art Centre); and *Between Two Worlds: Sculpture by David Ruben Piqtoukun* (Winnipeg Art Gallery). Instead of examining these catalogues as reflections of the exhibitions for which they were produced, the following section will focus on the anthropological character of each text. Consideration will be given to the devices used to present cultural information and the ways in which contemporary Inuit art is then framed by or made to represent Inuit culture.

Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing

Published in 1990 in conjunction with the first-ever solo exhibition of an Inuit artist at the National Gallery of Canada, *Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing* is based largely on interviews conducted with the artist in 1978, 1979, and 1989. The text is divided into two essays: one offers an art historical analysis of the artist's drawings; the other is "a kind of memoir, generated by Pudlo's own desire to document some of the events and illustrate some of the values that have shaped his life" (Routledge and Jackson 1990, 14). What distinguishes this catalogue from previous texts on Inuit art is not only the degree to which the artist's voice is privileged but also the art historical "worth" that the authors assign to the artist's cultural experience. As the introduction makes clear: "Not all of the biographical material is directly related to Pudlo's work as an artist, and yet without those contextual underpinnings his art cannot be fully understood."

In actual fact, the artist's "memoir" is a biographical essay in which an art historian has linked lengthy excerpts from interviews with the artist. While this is in no way hidden from the reader – the scholar's name is cited as author and coloured ink is used to distinguish the two separate voices – what does remain hidden (or, at least, buried in footnotes) is the essay's conflation of time. Statements from interviews in the late 1970s share the same "ethnographic present" as those from 1989. For example, of the artist's wife, the author writes: "Her long debilitating illness eventually ended in her death from throat cancer in March 1972. Again Pudlo suffered the grief of profound loss, a loss that still pains him *today*." This is followed by Pudlo's comment, "Even *now*, though it has been many years since my wife died, still it's that sad feeling. Several of my children have died – two of unnatural causes – and those were unhappy times for me. But even then, losing a wife doesn't compare – that's the saddest thing that I've known" (Routledge and Jackson 1990, 77, emphasis added). These two statements imply that the artist was speaking close to the time of the exhibition (presumably in an interview in 1989), but Pudlo actually made this comment ten years earlier.

Other culturally informative material not commonly used by art historians includes the glossary of Inuktitut terms in the "Note to the Reader." Interestingly, even the explanation of the use and spelling of artists' names in the catalogue begins with information on Inuit culture: "Traditionally, Inuit were known by one name" (12). In addition to the customary reproductions of artwork, the catalogue contains twenty photographs, thirteen of which include the artist (alone, at work, or with friends). The remaining photographs portray scenes of Arctic life between 1918 and 1989. Between the two essays, there are three fairly elaborate maps or charts: the first is a chronology of historical events that occurred during Pudlo's life; the second is a diagram of the artist's family tree; and the third is a map of the Eastern Arctic that includes traditional camps and Inuktitut place names.

Images of artwork, with the exception of several small black and white reproductions of Pudlo's prints and drawings in the first essay, have been placed at the end of the catalogue. This placement is significant in that it implies that the artwork is informed by the preceding cultural and biographical material. However, the catalogue makes no further attempt to show a direct link between the artwork and the contextual information. There are no images of artwork in the artist's memoir (save for a photograph of a commissioned piece *in situ*), and no mention is made of the artist or any aspect of his life in the pages containing the illustrations. In other words, if the readers are to find connections between Pudlo's life and his work – short of making something up – they must rely on the interpretation provided in the first essay. For example, here is a description of a coloured-pencil drawing.

> *In* Modern Life and the Old Way *a mysterious face emerges in the distant cityscape, almost hidden in the maze of buildings, trees, and buses. By contrast, the Inuit hunter in the lower portion of the drawing stands out large and clear in his uncluttered space. Pudlo's thoughts here about the South appear to coincide with a trip to Toronto and Montreal in 1978. (33)*

In effect, the artist's cultural experience is subordinate to, or in service of the art historian's analysis.

Inuit Women Artists

In 1994, four years after the Pudlo catalogue was written, the Canadian Museum of Civilization published *Inuit Women Artists* in conjunction with *Isumavut* (*Our Thoughts*), an exhibition based on the lives and work of nine Cape Dorset women artists. This catalogue consists primarily of artists' statements and autobiographical writing collected in 1991 and 1992 during two research trips to the North. The significance of having Inuit artists record their thoughts and memories for inclusion in an art historical text is captured in a comment by one of the artists (who is left unnamed) in the introduction: "We have never been asked to write about ourselves. We have always been written about" (Leroux, Jackson and Freeman 1994, 16).

The catalogue text is divided into three distinct sections. The first section contains the introduction, which was written by a professional Inuit translator and contributing editor, and two essays, which were written by art historians. The first essay offers a relatively brief but conventional analysis of each artist's style and approach. The second essay situates the exhibition and catalogue within the broader context of changing attitudes toward representing Inuit art and culture.

> *Modern Inuit women are no longer culturally bound to defer quietly and patiently while their interests are interpreted and represented by others, and no longer do principal museums turn exclusively to non-Inuit professionals for interpretations of the lives and art of Inuit artists. An alternative model is emerging which acknowledges that understanding is enriched by an awareness of the values and intentions of the artists. In this model, the curator (whether from within the culture or without) attempts not so much to impose a curatorial viewpoint as to facilitate communication between artists and audience and to acknowledge the complexity of the human experience embodied in the works of art (38).*

The second section, the main body of the text, is broken into nine segments – one for each artist – that are arranged chronologically according to the artists' birth dates. Each segment includes a biography written by an art historian, a photograph of the artist, and a memoir written by the artist. (For the two artists who were no longer living when the catalogue was produced, older interview material and statements by other artists were used in lieu of an autobiographical memoir.) Each segment ends with reproductions of the artists' work. The final section of the catalogue is devoted to reflections written by three prominent Inuit women. Each essay is also accompanied by a brief biography written by an art historian.

The most significant difference between the artist's memoir in the Pudlo catalogue and the ones provided in *Inuit Women Artists* is authorship. In the Pudlo catalogue, the reader is presented with a "biography" created out of statements culled from interviews. In *Inuit Women Artists*, the reader is presented with "autobiographies" written explicitly for the catalogue. Notwithstanding the importance of such a distinction, it is crucial to recognize that, like the Pudlo text, the women's memoirs were translated from Inuktitut to English and then edited (40).[3] Moreover, the kind of information provided in the essay on Pudlo (personal memories and thoughts on life) is strikingly similar to the kind of information contained in the Inuit women's memoirs. While there are several instances of women artists recalling their grief over deaths of family members, a far less emotional example will serve to illustrate the experiential nature of the memoirs. Kenojuak Ashevak wrote:

> *I would like to continue telling a story about my life. I used to be so embarrassed to be a left-handed person. If there was a group of people, there was no way I would use an ulu [a moon-shaped woman's knife] to cut a piece of meat. My grandfather used to be left-handed too, I remember, and he would try and discourage me from using my left hand because he knew what he had gone through. He would even tie up one of my sleeves so I could not use that hand. In those days it used to be embarrassing to be left-handed; it's not that way today. I wouldn't have any trouble to get my left arm out to use it even if it were tied up. Perhaps it's because of my old age that I don't find it embarrassing any more to be left-handed. That is one of the experiences I had to go through that was hard on me (97).*

Inuit Women Artists includes a glossary of Inuktitut terms (more comprehensive than the one in the Pudlo catalogue) and a map of the Eastern Arctic that shows traditional Inuit camps and uses Inuktitut place names. There are no photographs other than those of the artists and there are no diagrams or chronologies. Instead, emphasis is placed on the artwork, most of which is reproduced in the central portion of the catalogue (with the exception of a few black and white illustrations in the first essay). All the images are identified by title, date, medium, dimensions, and collection, and a large number of works are accompanied by an artist's statement. In some cases, two or three separate statements made at different times during one interview, or in several different interviews, appear under or beside an image. However, this disparity is made abundantly clear because the time and place of each statement are identified.

While all of the statements refer to some aspect of the motivations or intentions behind the artwork, the length and scope of the captions range widely. In reference to the sculpture, *Nanook Eating Sedna* (1988), Qaunak Mikkigak is quoted as saying: "The polar bears can eat just about anything that is alive" (129). A statement by Napachie Pootoogook describes her 1982 print, *Drawing of My Tent*: "When I make my drawings I try to make [them] look good. This scene depicts someone doing some drawing posing for someone to take a picture" (149). In one of the more elaborate captions, for Ovilu Tunnillie's sculpture *This Has Touched My Life* (1991–1992), the artist relates a childhood experience in the South where she was being treated for tuberculosis.

> *When I was in a hospital away from home, it was during the years of 1957, 1958 and 1959. While I was away, I was taken by automobile to see these two women from the hospital where I stayed. A woman and a man who were social workers accompanied me on this trip, to where, I don't know. Maybe it was during the month of August. When I saw these two, I really noticed the way they were dressed and their faces were hidden. Well, I could see them but they were unrecognizable as they wore hats that had lace pulled down in front of their faces and they each had purses. I really looked at how they were dressed and having seen them like this has been the most memorable for me. I have not met any white person such as these two yet. I wonder sometimes if they were ashamed of their faces because I've never seen that before.... The hospital where I stayed was in Ninga, somewhere in Manitoba. [It] was after we moved out of the hospital that we went to see these two veiled women. So this has been the most memorable part of my life while I was away there. And I returned to Cape Dorset in the month of May (239).*

While cultural experience comes to the fore in *Inuit Women Artists*, the highly personal character of this experience limits, to some degree, the signification of Inuit culture in the art. In other words, the artwork is represented as a reflection of the artists' own experiences and perspectives rather than as a reflection of Inuit culture as a *whole*.

Qamanittuaq: Where the River Widens – Drawings by Baker Lake Artists

The MacDonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph published *Qamanittuaq: Where the River Widens: Drawings by Baker Lake Artists* in 1995 to accompany a traveling exhibition that had already had a landmark opening in Baker Lake in 1994. This exhibition was the first of its kind to open in a northern community. The catalogue focuses on the lives and graphic work of nineteen artists from Baker Lake, and is based on interviews conducted in that community in 1983, 1985, and 1993. The text is divided into two main parts. The first part contains an introduction, which describes the exhibition opening, and three essays: one by an Inuit artist and co-curator of the exhibition, one by an art historian, and one by Peter Millard, an English professor who has written several articles on Inuit art that examine "art historical" characteristics such as quality. Interestingly, Millard's essay is the only one that could be described as "art historical." The Inuit artist's essay recounts the author's own experience in coming to Baker Lake; the art historian's essay provides a social and economic history of the community during the contact and post-settlement eras, beginning with the early seventeenth century when British navigators began exploring the Keewatin District in search of the Northwest Passage (Jackson, Nasby and Noah 1995, 25). The second part of the catalogue is similar to the main body of *Inuit Women Artists*. It is arranged chronologically by artist and contains biographies followed by images of artwork with extensive captioning.

Notwithstanding Peter Millard's art historical contribution, the text of *Qamanittuaq* is decidedly cultural, if not downright anthropological in parts. Here is an excerpt from the art historian's essay.

> *The population of Baker Lake today is just over 1,200, of whom 90% are Inuit. These Inuit are affiliated with at least ten cultural subgroups which still form the primary units of their social and cultural identification. Four of these subgroups, which derive ancestral identity from the Netsilik Inuit, comprise the largest population segments in Baker Lake. The subgroups include: (1) Uqusiksilingmiut from the Back River; (2) their neighbors from the West, the Ualingmiut; (3) the Saningayukmiut from Garry Lake; and (4) the Illuiliaqmiut from the coastal area around Gjoa Haven. These four groups share common Netsilik cultural roots and are identifiable by distinctive dialects, customs, and styles of dress (31).*

The two maps in the catalogue are a further indication of an ostensibly disproportionate emphasis on culture. One shows the Central Arctic, and has an anecdotal caption informing the reader that Qamanittuaq (Baker Lake) is the geographic centre of Canada. The other shows the three main Inuit groups that came to make up the population of the newly-formed settlement in the 1950s and 1960s with a caption explaining the breakdown of the groups into ten distinct sub-groups (6, 23).

The selection of photographs in *Qamanittuaq* is also revealing. Of the twenty-two photographs in the catalogue, eleven show one or more artists (in any capacity) and eleven show no artists whatsoever; most of the photographs in the latter group pre-date the emergence of contemporary art practice in Baker Lake. Indeed, the first two photographs featured in the catalogue are of generic camp scenes in the 1930s. As the captions at the end of the catalogue demonstrate, neither the individuals nor the exact area represented in the photographs are identifiable.

> *Summer camp in area of Chantrey Inlet (?), c. 1930s. Note the sealskin tent and combination of fur clothing as well as evidence of manufactured trade goods such as the stove, cooking pots and items of clothing.* Photo courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives *(134).*
>
> *Winter camp scene in Keewatin District, c. 1930s.* Photo courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives *(134).*

If the anthropological aspects of the essay, maps, and photographs were restricted to the first section of the catalogue – that is, kept apart from the images of artwork – *Qamanittuaq* could be said to reflect the apparent disjunction between art and culture in the Pudlo catalogue. This, however, is not the case.

Although there are structural similarities between the second half of *Qamanittuaq* and the central section of *Inuit Women Artists*, the captioning of artwork differs significantly. While most of the captions in *Qamanittuaq* include interview material, in virtually all cases, this material is included within, or framed by, statements made by the art historian that highlight cultural factors imbued in or "signified" by the works. (The only exception to this pattern is the segment on the artist who co-curated the exhibition.) For example, a caption for an untitled drawing by Nancy Pukingrnak begins with the art historian's "voice," represented in regular font:

> *In the inland area around Back River where Nancy Pukingrnak spent her childhood, fish were often the only source of food. In the lower right corner of this drawing, Pukingrnak shows the men, wearing only their skin pants in the cold river water, building a stone weir to trap fish. Also pictured are men setting a line for drying the fish and a woman cleaning the fish. Summer tents on the left border of the drawing establish this as a summer campsite. Pukingrnak confirmed that this drawing records the old ways (122).*

The caption continues in the italicized "voice" of the artist: "This is how we lived. We worked with our hands to get our food. That is what this picture is all about – working with our hands to get food. And we used to dry our food also as it's drawn there" (122). Arguably, both the art historian's statement and the artist's comment contextualize the work within traditional Inuit customs. What is informative, however, is that the artist made the statement in 1994 during a symposium organized around the opening of the exhibition, when the shape of the catalogue was most likely already established.

The strongest evidence that a cultural reading of the artworks originated with the art historian is contained in the segment on Luke Anguhadluq, an artist who died two years before the earliest interviews in the catalogue. The following excerpts, drawn from captions comprised entirely of the art historian's interpretations, reflect an unmistakable attempt to "write" culture. Of an untitled drawing of a dog team, she writes, "The three dogs, their heads thrust energetically forward, each pull on an individual trace as is typical of the dog team harnessing system of the Central Arctic (54)." About *Inuit*, a graphite and coloured pencil drawing of four figures, she states, "In this drawing, Anguhadluq presents two adult figures and two children. The adults are presumably male as indicated by the straight lower hems of their parkas (55)." On *Drum Dance* she writes, "A favoured theme in Anguhudluq's work, the drum dance was a communal activity with both social and religious significance in traditional Inuit culture (56)." In reference to Anguhadluq's use of a fishing theme in an untitled drawing, she notes, "unlike Inuit living in coastal areas, Baker Lake Inuit traditionally depended for their survival almost exclusively on fish, caribou, muskox, and small ground animals rather than on seals and other sea mammals (57)." The most overt and convincing example is perhaps the caption above *Untitled (figure with grey parka)* (1977), which begins, "A considerable amount of cultural information is expressed in the drawings of early Baker Lake artists like Anguhadluq (58)." Taken on its own, the remainder of the statement could easily be mistaken for a photographic caption out of National Geographic (Lutz and Collins 1993, 76–80, 91–3):

> *This bold image portrays the distinct regional clothing style of the Western Arctic from the area around Coppermine or Cambridge Bay. The woman with her long narrow hood, full-shouldered parka and narrow kiniq (front apron) wears hair sticks in her stiff braids and exhibits the tattoo pattern typical of women in the Western Arctic in the 1920s and 1930s (58).*

Between Two Worlds: Sculpture By David Ruben Piqtoukun

The final exhibition catalogue is the Winnipeg Art Gallery's 1996 publication, *Between Two Worlds: Sculpture By David Ruben Piqtoukun*. Although the work is much less substantial in length and scope than the other three catalogues, *Between Two Worlds* presents the greatest challenge to this study. It consists of a one-page introduction giving the context of the exhibition, a cursory biography at the end of the text, and images of artwork accompanied by Piqtoukun's own interpretative statements. There are no maps, diagrams, or photographs of the artist or his community, and yet, this is the most culturally loaded of the four catalogues. Of his sculpture titled *Nuna* (1995), Piqtoukun writes:

> *Nuna, the land, was seen as a nurturing mother that supported the animals, the spirits and the Inuit. Income from government programs has been a very poor substitute. The founding of Nunavut is changing the outlook of many people who now want to take charge of their lives again. This hope is reflected in the upturned face at the top of the sculpture.*
>
> Wight (1996, 23)

Surely, this is an example of "writing culture." But is it anthropology? The catalogue was designed and prepared by an art historian but the primary text was written by an Inuk about Inuit culture. To what extent, if any, can the writings of a non-Western person be considered anthropology? In light of the evidence provided in this study – namely, that artists' voices in exhibition catalogues inevitably serve a purpose that is never value-free – a more appropriate question might be: In what contexts can the writings of a non-Western person be considered anthropology?

Problematizing non-Western art history as a form of writing culture may never solve the crisis of representation for art historians. What it will do, however, is force art historians to take greater notice of the implications involved in drawing on and presenting the "other" point of view. Arguably, cultural information is a useful tool for gaining insight into the environment in which artwork is made. But it is a tool – and an anthropological tool at that. Ultimately, in order to ensure that cross-cultural description in art history is, at the very least, handled with care, we need an open exchange between anthropologists and art historians. Such an exchange is also the first step toward resolving the larger question of whether writing about art is the same as writing about culture.

Notes

1. Marcus and Fisher (1986, 8) define the "crisis of representation" in the humanities and social sciences as an exigency that occurs "from uncertainty about adequate means of describing social reality." Geertz (1988, 133) observes that "Indeed, the very right to write – to write ethnography – seems at risk." George Marcus and Michael Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
2. This may be due to the greater research budgets available to art historians working in museums and galleries.
3. Arguably, there was more of a concerted effort in the later catalogue to remain true to the artist's original comments. Marion Jackson notes: "It was my privilege to work with the manuscripts prepared by the artists and to review edited texts with each of them. While I did make minor editorial changes in the English translations, such changes were minimal and my intent at all times was to preserve both the substance and the spirit of the original expressions" (Leroux, Jackson and Freeman 1994, 40).

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Status 2000

Presenting Contemporary Inuit Art in the Gallery Setting

Christine Lalonde

Background

Art History

The study of Inuit art forms began within the discipline of anthropology. Franz Boas (1964), Diamond Jenness (1925), and Knud Rasmussen (1930) all refer to artistic expressions in their published reports on Inuit culture(s). These reports encompass both traditional objects, such as the decorated amulets of the prehistoric Dorset culture (ca.800 B.C.–800 A.D.), and newer forms, such as the small-scale ivory carvings made during the time of their field explorations. As well, they collected drawings by their Inuit informants and reproduced them in their publications (Boas 1964, 223–5; Jenness 1922). These later objects, regarded as a continuation of past and even prehistoric Inuit practices, fell into their area of expertise when categorized as "art of primitive peoples."

Observations of anthropologists such as these provide art historians with information on the earliest phases of Inuit visual expressions and elaborate the relation of those expressions to music, performance/ritual, and oral traditions. The work of these early anthropologists also establishes a precedent for an interdisciplinary art historical approach that places contemporary (post-1949) Inuit art in its cultural, socio-economic, and political contexts.

The recent inclusion of Inuit art courses in university art history programs has coincided with significant developments within the discipline itself. In reaction to the dominance of formalist approaches, the "new art history" has called for a renewed emphasis on context for both the art and the art historian.[1] This has led to a need for both multidisciplinary approaches and reflexiveness on the part of the art historian.

From its inception, art historical writing has given credence to the cultural sources of Inuit art and by so doing has integrated a form of interdisciplinary exchange in the study of the art forms. Art historians borrow from other disciplines such as archaeology, sociology, and anthropology. Likewise, archaeologists, sociologists and anthropologists consider Inuit artistic expressions, past and present, within their social contexts. Contributions made through the social sciences have undoubtedly been beneficial to art historians. For example, one of the most insightful articles leading toward an understanding of the production of contemporary Inuit sculpture – Charles Martijn's "Canadian Eskimo Carving in Historical Perspective" – was first published in *Anthropos* (Martijn 1964).

According to Keith Moxey, however, it is not enough to recreate the context of creation for a work of art. It is also important that art historians be conscious of their own cultural biases. Moxey notes how the introduction of semiotic theory has shaken the epistemological foundations of history. If all language is value laden and subjective, and if our connection to the past resides strictly in texts, it follows that there can be no single attainable historical truth – all one can do is interpret. This leads to a recognition that all historical narratives are constructions. "The value of a semiotic conception of authorship lies in the recognition that knowledge is always partial and situated rather than complete and universal" (Moxey 1994, 27). Citing Norman Bryson, Moxey explains that an attempt to situate a work of art in its socio-economic and political context is not sufficient. What is also required is a self-consciousness on the part of the historians who view the art through their own set of cultural values and motives (5).

Enter Inuit art. On many levels, the timing is good – the study of Inuit art falls easily in step with these developments. First, as art of the Other, there is a natural and obvious need for an interdisciplinary approach and an understanding of the socio-cultural underpinning that the objects themselves demand. Second, the critical work of scholars such as Charles Martijn and Nelson Graburn has resulted in a de-mystification of Inuit art, particularly in relation to its acculturation (Graburn 1969). Thirdly, there has been a recent tendency for art historians to assess their role in interpreting the visual expressions of cultures to which they do not belong.[2] Although Moxey is referring to our relation to the past, his framework is nonetheless useful when the distance is a cultural rather than chronological one. In light of Moxey's argument, the work of art – the object itself – becomes a meeting ground between the circumstances of its creation and the circumstances of the interpreter. Inuit art can certainly be seen in this light, since it is undoubtedly a hybrid art, with Inuit culture on one end and the art world on the other.

Art Exhibitions

The earliest exhibitions of Inuit art in the 1950s were largely promotional. For the most part, writing about the art forms and artists during the 1950s and 1960s consists of educational pamphlets and other publications funded by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and newspaper articles that focused on the sensationalism of hunters-become-artists. Rather than presenting contemporary Inuit society, these publications romanticized Inuit artists by promoting their art as part of a collective vision with strong links to traditional sources. Of course, this was not totally untrue, but the romanticization behind such promotion served more to distort than to reveal the real-day circumstances of Inuit artists.

The 1970s and 1980s was a period of flourishing interest that saw the mounting of major international exhibitions with catalogues such as *Sculpture / Inuit* (1971) and *The Inuit Print* (1977). The Winnipeg Art Gallery, which began collecting Inuit art in 1953, hosted a number of pivotal exhibitions. Large private collections that were acquired by public institutions were researched, documented, and catalogued. Also, donations of collections often became the basis for additional exhibitions, such as the Art Gallery of Ontario's "Grasp Tight the Old Ways" (1983).

This increase in research and writing for exhibitions brought more focus to individual creators and to their artworks as personal expressions. Solo exhibitions such as "Kenojuak" (1981) and "Pudlo: Thirty Years of Drawing" (1990) brought international recognition to individual artists and placed their work on a par with that of other Canadian artists. Undeniably, the solo exhibition is part and parcel of the modernist dictum of "artist as genius" (a notion not necessarily shared by Inuit) and was adopted to legitimize the status of Inuit artists as artists. Although this art historical approach brought focus to the artist, the cultural sources of the art – myths, legends, and traditions – were always at the fore of interpretation of the art form. What appears problematic in hindsight is the emphasis placed on the past traditions of Inuit culture (as shown in the subject matter) rather than on the current living and working conditions of the artist. The dilemma for art historians and curators of Inuit art is that many people see a contradiction between the lifestyle represented in the art form and the contemporary reality of the artist.

Art History and Art Exhibitions

At a time when Inuit art history was not regularly taught in universities, exhibitions represented the main focus for understanding and knowledge of Inuit visual expression. For this reason, the publications for these exhibitions have a significant shelf life; they have become the main texts upon which art history students rely. In the absence of an art historical and critical treatment of Inuit art, it has fallen to exhibitions to write the story. However, art history and art gallery exhibitions are not one and the same thing. Art history in principle seeks to be comprehensive, whereas the curatorial process necessarily involves making selections. Since exhibitions are themselves somewhat self-contained entities, it is obvious that the sum of exhibition catalogues cannot replace the art historical survey. It is fair to state, however, that both the art historian and the exhibition curator aim to present an objective view and often use similar approaches and tools.

It is perhaps no surprise that Inuit art – whether we refer to the way it is studied in academia, or the way it is exhibited by curators in the gallery setting – is both accepted and marginal.

Dialogue for Discussion

The following selective commentary on museum discourse relevant for the display of Inuit art has been written in the context of the brief background presented above. I have highlighted three issues that seem central to the display of Inuit art: the location of permanent exhibition space, the relationship and roles of the curator and the artist, and the audience response.

Although it might appear that, in their adherence to modernist methodologies, art galleries and museums are resistant to change, it is undeniable that the curatorial process has been influenced by the same critical theories as the discipline of art history. In addition, museums and art galleries have been going through a period of self-examination. A number of recent publications have focused on issues revolving around the museum practice of displaying objects, especially those of non-Western cultures. Foremost is the recognition that, as with academic disciplines, museums construct histories based on interpretation in addition to the mechanics of display.

In *Exhibiting Cultures*, Svetlana Alpers comments on the "museum effect." Although appropriate for Western art, "[b]y contrast, in exhibiting the material culture of other peoples, in particular what used to be called 'primitive' art, it is the museum effect – the tendency to isolate something from its world, to offer it up for attentive looking and thus transform it into art like our own – that has been the subject of heated debate."

Whereas Alpers acknowledges the legitimizing power of display, she argues that the distinctions made by museums "need not have been a cultural value for the makers or users, nor need the object be what we would call a work of art. What the museum registers is visual distinction, not necessarily cultural significance" (Alpers 1991, 30). She suggests that museums should establish their limited parameters so as not to be held responsible for representing a culture in its totality.

Susan Vogel claims that museums and galleries must be both cognizant and transparent, about the way(s) in which they represent cultures. "Museum professionals must be conscious about what they do and why, and they should inform the public that what it sees is not material that 'speaks for itself' but material filtered through the tastes, interests, politics, and state of knowledge of particular presenters at a particular moment in time" (Vogel 1991, 201). With regard to the visual arts in particular, Sharon Brooks observes that exhibitions carry messages within their curatorial methodologies.

> *Contemporary exhibition formats, such as retrospectives, overviews of recent production, and thematic exhibitions continue to operate within many of the structures of modernist curatorial practice ... these formats continue to structure the reception of art and spectatorship, and often close down the potential of the art in favour of the message inscribed in the structure – messages like "this is a great artist whose work has developed over time like all other great artists of history".*
>
> Brooks (1996, 99)

The fact that Inuit art is made as art first and foremost does not set it outside of questions and concerns relating to the display of material culture. If cultural artifacts such as masks have crossed over to be considered artworks, what is there against a crossover in the other direction – with Inuit sculpture, prints, drawings, and textiles being considered, in the near or distant future, as the cultural artifacts essential to Inuit heritage?

An equally important question is *who* determines the appropriate context for display as "art" or "artifact." When a single work by an Inuit artist is exhibited, it may be seen as the work of an individual, whether or not the artist's culture or race is identified. But when a gallery space is devoted to Inuit art, it will be seen de facto as not only an exhibition of artwork but also a representation of a culture. The exhibiting institution and its curators necessarily assume responsibility for how that culture is presented; the implications of this cannot be ignored.

Issue: Location location location

It makes sense to focus a discussion of location on permanent collection displays as they are less transient and less obvious as constructions. These on-site, long-term displays closely reflect the mandate of the institution and send out strong signals as to the place or status of an art form. Moreover, in their avoidance of temporal curatorial premises, permanent collection installations are closer to the authoritative approach adopted in art historical narratives. Art galleries and museums must be conscious of the impact that permanent collection galleries have on viewers. According to Vogel,

> *The museum communicates values in the types of programs it chooses to present and in the audiences it addresses, in the size of staff departments and the emphasis they are given, in the selection of objects for acquisition, and more concretely in the location of displays in the building and the subtleties of lighting and label copy. None of these things is neutral. None is overt. All tell the audience what to think beyond what the museum ostensibly is teaching.*
>
> Vogel (1991, 200, *emphasis added*)

One much-debated issue has been whether to integrate aboriginal art forms and cultural objects into mainstream exhibition spaces or to display them separately as distinct yet isolated expressions. One argument for integration is that separation equals marginalization. Moira McLoughlin points out how separate areas of display create boundaries.

> *Marginalization in the museum setting is accomplished by the erection of barriers which demarcate the distance between the exhibited and the exhibitor: the creation of the Other. The Colonial Other is that which is not self-defining: he or she exists in opposition to those who have the power to construct and enforce boundaries of race, gender, and ethnicity. The Other is marked by difference – in location, time, colour, custom, history or gender.*
>
> McLoughlin (1993, 369)

McLoughlin suggests we think of exhibition space as a "borderland," as a place where the message is one of contact and interaction between Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal histories. "The challenge to traditional museological thought and practice is asking that we consider alternative spaces, to map out spaces and identities that defy essentializing. These critiques suggest a museum where encounters within these polarities is paramount: a borderland" (McLoughlin 1993, 378).

Deborah Doxtator has argued that integration is not necessarily the solution because it can result in the simple addition of Aboriginal histories to a pre-existing narrative. She recounts her own reaction when reading native history texts, "This is not my history ... [t]his is the history of someone else fitting me into their history." Indigenous communities themselves need to claim responsibility and "to establish a framework of fundamental cultural philosophies and principles that serves as the basis of forming new kinds of institutions" (Doxtator 1996, 58). Essentially, this means the foundation of more community-based galleries with mandates better suited to address the specific needs of the culture from the base up. The danger of Doxtator's argument is that it might serve to excuse majority-culture institutions from revising their own mandate and methods of display.

Issue: The Triumvirate – Artist, Curator, and Institution

Curators work within parameters defined by their institutions, with limited budgets and resources, with a specified exhibition space, and even with restrictions to their authorship. However curators can maintain control over the role they take in their relation with artists. Of course, curators respond to the art forms they work with and this also plays a large part in shaping their role – as gate keeper, subjectivist, pioneer-discoverer, mediator, guardian, and activist to name only a few (Baert 1996, 117–18). Perhaps the best assessment to date of the curating of Inuit art comes from Ingo Hessel in his essay, "Contemporary Inuit Art."

> *There is a fundamental difference in the way Inuit art and 'southern' art are treated by critics and curators. Although Inuit art has been appropriated and promoted by Euro-Canadians as a quintessentially "Canadian" art form at home and abroad, it is still considered exotic and foreign by many, if not most, collectors, commercial galleries, public institutions and curators. Curators see their role as not only presenting beautiful and interesting art objects, but also allowing viewers to understand another culture through these works of art.*
>
> Hessel (1991, 12)

Exhibitions of Inuit art within art galleries have followed a modernist approach in keeping with the display of Western art forms in general. Too often in the past, curators have acted singularly as "pioneer-explorers." The premise of this role is the notion that, in order to appreciate Inuit art, the audience needs to be educated about Inuit culture first, and the artist second. Marion Jackson offers a curatorial strategy that attempts to expand on this by involving the artists more directly.

> *Museums have a long history of interpreting aboriginal art from the "objective" perspective of trained museum professionals and presenting it from a clearly defined curatorial perspective ... An alternative model is emerging which acknowledges that understanding is enriched by an awareness of the values and intentions of the artists. In this model, the curator (whether from within the culture or without) attempts not so much to impose a curatorial viewpoint as to facilitate communication between artists and audience and to acknowledge the complexity of the human experience embodied in the works of art.*
>
> Jackson (1994, 38)

As Jackson notes, working collaboratively with artists is one way to shift the dynamic away from a one-perspective curatorial approach. Involving the living artist is also a significant way to address the juncture between the cultural impetus of Inuit art and contemporary society in the North. Another benefit is a much-needed exploration of the creative motivations and working practices of individual Inuit artists. It is worth noting that a strong relationship and an ongoing dialogue of issues and ideas exist between curators and artists that live in other parts of Canada. Although marketing is unquestionably a dominant influence on Inuit art, there is room for curators to take a proactive role in the opportunities for exposure and dialogue they can offer to an artist. Realistically, this is difficult for Inuit artists and curators alike, because they must often work across significant geographical distance and language barriers. This problem has existed since the inception of the contemporary period and is constantly being tackled by curators, often quite successfully in the context of temporary exhibitions. However much still remains to be accomplished in the area of permanent collection display.

Issue: Audience and Access

Museums and art galleries are public spaces that aim to present a collective history. Arguably, this last issue, as it relates to public audience, might be the central issue upon which the others hinge. For example, how can we resolve questions relating to the location of an exhibition of Aboriginal art (mainstream or marginal), if we do not fully understand the implications of the signals or messages that the audience is receiving? Given the importance of audience response, it is surprising how little has been done to assess the audience for Inuit art. Who visits Inuit art exhibitions and what are their expectations? Are art gallery visitors more knowledgeable about the Canadian Arctic and Inuit today than they were twenty years ago? To what extent? How many Aboriginal people visit art galleries and museums? The lack of audience feedback can be especially disconcerting for curators who must develop premises and approaches based on often tenuous notions of who they are addressing. Because the costs of surveys and questionnaires are considerable, such items are rarely included in exhibition budgets. Instead, institutions rely on media reviews to determine the success or failure of an exhibition. But such reviews may or may not reflect the average visitors' reaction. The issue of audience feedback is particularly important in view of the fact that art galleries and museums must now compete with the entertainment industry. Surely the expense of surveys can be justified if the results will help institutions to produce exhibitions that effectively communicate with, captivate, and inform the public.

These three issues – the location of permanent collection installations, multi-vocal curatorial approaches in permanent displays, and the need to better understand audiences – are, in my opinion, the most crucial and practical issues facing curators and museum professionals. It is my hope that this paper and the questions raised within it will serve as an impetus for dialogue, the outcome of which will be ideas, approaches and strategies to make exhibitions of Inuit art better founded and more stimulating.

Notes

1. There appears to be no unified methodology to define the "new art history." For the purposes of this paper, I have decided to focus on only two aspects – the cross-over of anthropology and art history, and the critique of the foundation of art history – since these have been the dominant tools with which my education and museum experience has made me familiar.
2. It is worth noting that these issues are not new – they have been addressed by those working with Inuit art. One example is the panel discussion, "It's Native: Where Do You Put It?" at the annual conference of the Canadian Museum Association, held in Toronto, 23 May 1985. See also the report on the Conference for Curators and Specialists Who Work with Inuit Art, held at the Canadian Government Conference Centre in Ottawa, 15–16 September 1982 (Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1983), particularly "Approaches to Interpreting Inuit Art," 143–93.

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After Essay – And What About Inuit Art?

Jean Blodgett

The Past

At the beginning of this session Christine Lalonde, making some preparatory remarks about her paper, mentioned a conference organized by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in Ottawa in 1982. The report of the *Conference for Curators and Specialists Who Work with Inuit Art* consists of direct transcriptions of tape recordings made over the two-day conference, and provides a useful historical document as to the state of Inuit art exhibition and research in the early 1980s. In addition to roundtable presentations given by thirty-one delegates on their current involvement with Inuit art, there were sessions on topics such as "Field Experience" and "Approaches to Interpreting Inuit Art." The latter session included presentations on three specific aspects: The Historical View; Interviewing Artists as a Method of Interpreting Inuit Art; and Problems of Cross-Cultural Interpretations.

Lalonde went on to specify the issues raised during the papers and discussions at the conference: questions of hybridity and authenticity, a need to involve artists in interpretation, and the fundamental context of Inuit art as a dynamic that involves two cultures. And, as she noted, these concerns are still relevant today. She continues:

> *I refer to this conference for two reasons: to illustrate that the ongoing debate among art historians and curators has been integral to working with Inuit art and that the questions then are relevant now because it is not so much, I believe, a repositioning of the object as it is repositioning ourselves, and that this is necessarily a constantly evolving process. My second point is, if people who work with Inuit art have been conscious of these issues, have addressed them in their work, why has so little of this been communicated to the public? [emphasis added]*

Before dealing with Lalonde's second point, it may be helpful to note other occasions on which Inuit art issues have been discussed in similar forums. In 1983 the National Gallery commissioned a "Report on Indian and Inuit Art at the National Gallery of Canada" which was concerned with the collecting and exhibiting of this art; many of the conclusions were the result of consultation with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants in the two fields. In May 1985 the Canadian Museums Association Annual Conference included a session entitled "It's Native: Where Do You Put It?" And in 1999 the Art Gallery of Ontario hosted a gathering of individuals to discuss issues relating to the display and interpretation of the Inuit art in the Gallery's collection.

Why has so little of this dialogue become public knowledge? There are, I think, several possible reasons. First, information from these discussions and/or conferences is not readily accessible through the usual sources for research material and is thus not particularly well known to anyone beyond the individuals involved. Also, curators of Inuit art who work with these issues on a day-to-day basis may well have developed practical solutions in real working conditions, learning as they go by trial and error and by consultation with their few colleagues in this specialized area. Curators of Inuit art usually work on their own – as the one individual with this specialized knowledge within an institution – preparing exhibitions in spaces that are separated from the rest of Canadian art history. Inuit art continues to function on the periphery of the art establishment for several reasons: it is difficult to fit it into western art history; there are questions of its authenticity; and it does not operate on an intellectual level that is appealing to practitioners of contemporary art criticism.

Inuit Art vs. Indian Art

The first question of this session concerned the relationship between art made by Inuit artists and First Nations artists. "Do we deal with Inuit art differently than First Nations, or do we deal with them both in the same way, and how do we deal with the differences between the two?" Christine Lalonde addressed this question in her opening remarks: "I hope that the discussion relating to Inuit art, although the issues are somewhat different, will contribute to the larger dialogue on the representation of aboriginal art forms in the gallery." The relationship between Inuit art and First Nations art was also referred to in response to a question posed during the wrap up session about the usefulness of the 1999 AGO symposium on Inuit art that dealt with many of the same issues as the present conference. Anna Hudson of the AGO replied, "We wanted to see Inuit art discussed in with other Aboriginal art in the wider context of this weekend."

Although Inuit and First Nations art can and have been discussed together in theoretical terms, the two are rarely shown together in a single exhibition space. Older, more traditional First Nations art is either shown on its own (especially work such as Northwest Coast masks or Woodland School paintings) or as a component in a permanent display of Euro-Canadian art history (for example, Haida argillite poles with Emily Carr paintings). The latter tends to be rather awkward as it puts Native art in a supporting role to the western art history model. More recent First Nations artworks are either shown on their own (in themed exhibitions or permanent collection displays) or mixed in with works by other contemporary Canadian or international artists, especially if the works are visually compatible. In these instances Native and non-Native artworks tend to be seen as equal components in the display.

But Inuit art has been consistently displayed on its own in a space separated from all other Canadian art, as is the case at institutions such as the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the National Gallery of Canada, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and the Art Gallery of Ontario. This separation may, however, become less viable if Inuit artists make any significant shift to subjects and materials that are less obviously Inuit. Panelist Michael Massie, who has a broader experience of Southern Canada and the Northwest Territories than many Inuit, made several comments relevant to this issue during the discussion period.

> *I don't make Inuit art, I make art, plain and simple ... I myself I don't want to be just shown as an Inuit artist in Inuit galleries. You know I am just an artist, I'm Canadian, I'm a Labradorian. I want to be shown as an artist, not just [as an] Inuit artist ... I wasn't intending to make traditional Inuit art, I was intending to make art. I just happen to be part Inuit.*

Ruth B. Phillips also pointed out one distinguishing characteristic of Inuit art. "Inuit art ... presents a set of very specific circumstances because it is the first Canadian aboriginal art form, as far as I can think, that was produced for display in these kinds of [gallery] spaces from the late 1940s on." Christine Lalonde further addressed the distinction between Inuit and First Nations art.

> *Inuit art has not been a neglected art form from the very beginning ... within ten years of producing art, there were exhibitions and catalogues and research being done. And I think that Inuit art has been legitimized by art galleries and museums in that we*

> *find permanent collections in a number of art galleries. I think the case has been different for other aboriginal art forms ... I'm curious why Inuit art has been accepted and why it has been [shown] in our national and provincial institutions and I think this is tied to the nature of the art form itself and to Canadian nationalism. I also think as Ruth pointed out we don't have some of the dilemmas relating to material culture, when something that is obviously made for one purpose is taken out of that specific context and is displayed in a way that readjusts our focus of it. I think Inuit art has been made for a Southern audience it is acknowledged as a hybrid form that there are on the one end Inuit artists and on the other end the Southern audience.*

Richard Fung made a valuable distinction between Inuit and First Nations art: "the big difference ... between Native art discourse and Inuit art discourse is that Native people have been able to insert themselves in powerful ways into that discourse and I just don't see that in the Inuit [situation], and that may be the crucial difference." His assessment of the power inequity inherent in the Inuit art situation was reinforced during the wrap up session when Barry Ace described the contrasting disposition of the Indian and Inuit art collections by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

During the 1980s the Department began the process of transferring its collections of Indian and Inuit art to various institutions. A committee was formed, meetings were held, and applications from different institutions were assessed. In 1990 the Inuit art collection was broken up and transferred to a number of institutions across the country, including the National Gallery of Canada, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and the Inuit Cultural Institute in Arviat. The Indian art collection was not divided up nor was it transferred to other organizations. According to Barry Ace, the Indian art collection is still at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs because of the lobbying done by Native organizations and Indian artists who insisted that the collection be maintained by the Department as an important legacy – as a history and as an ongoing process. Thus, as Ace notes, the integrity and power of the collection will always be there.

Who Does the Talking, Who Has the Power, Who Makes the Decisions?

The third member of this panel and the only Inuit participant, Michael Massie, commented on the distribution of the audience:

> *First of all my biggest concern is we're sitting here, we're talking about aboriginal art in general and if I look around I see about 95 per cent of the audience is not aboriginal. I think that's one thing that we have to look at, even though ... I understand how difficult it is to get people to travel from the North. But it is something we have to look at ... things should be planned well ahead of time so that you can get people here. It would have been nice to see a lot more aboriginal people here. We have people from down in Boston and Buffalo, wherever, but I don't see anybody from Gjoa Haven, I don't see anybody from Coppermine, I don't see anybody from Northern Labrador, Northern Quebec and it's kind of hard to really sit down and say we are going to start doing things: let's start changing aboriginal art, let's start changing the way things are going to be. But how can you do that when you don't have the input from the actual aboriginal artists and people who do the work?*

During the discussion period, Massie returned to this issue of Inuit participation:

> *When I was up North teaching [people there] wanted to know why white people want to talk about our art and our culture but they don't want to come up here and talk about it. "Why is it that they have to be down there? Why is it that they can't come up and see what we do, see how we live, understand our culture?" I mean we can't understand how other people live by sitting here in this auditorium ... the only way you are going to see it [the North] and understand it is actually to go up there. I think that if you are going to have shows, exhibitions, things like this about the North ... go up there, talk to them, sit down, stay with them for a week, live the way they live for a while, see how it is, you'll learn, your eyes will be opened a lot wider after you leave than when you first got there.*

The interaction between researchers and practitioners was also addressed by the other two panellists. Shannon Bagg noted how the number of curators going up North to do interviews for their exhibitions had significantly increased over the last ten years. During the discussion period she also commented "that Inuit art workshops ... really should just be held up in the North and the onus should be on the institutions to send academics up North. I think there won't be a real dialogue among artists until things start being held up North." Christine Lalonde appealed for research and collaboration beyond the temporary exhibition.

> *I think for temporary exhibitions there has been enormous research and work done directly with the artists both in in-depth interviews and collaborative partnerships. I think that the dialogue needs to be not so much tied to specific temporary exhibitions but it should be continuous and on-going; that we don't appear in a Northern community with an exhibition proposal already approved and ask the artists for their input at that stage. I might just mention that language of course is an extreme barrier and interviewing through interpreters can't necessarily be considered collaboration and it is not always dialogue. They end up being more questions and answers and the power relations that we had mentioned yesterday are not altered.*

Certainly, compared with First Nations art, the power relationships in Inuit art still leave much of the decision making in the hands of outsiders. This can, I think, be attributed to a number of causes in addition to the obvious one of a dominant culture in overall control. In addition to factors such as language and geographical distance, there are the cultural characteristics of Inuit, who traditionally did not "take power" or act in an overtly aggressive manner. Also, while there are many Inuit artists, there are few Inuit curators and researchers working with their own artistic culture. This has been changing, but until recently, only at a slow rate. The recent establishment of Nunavut and Inuit self-government has accelerated the pace of political change and the shift of power to the Inuit. In the artistic realm, there has been a move toward an increasing involvement of artists, both in conferences such as this one, and in exhibitions of their own work. In fact, an exhibition that was being organized while this conference was taking place has significantly shifted power in the arts from non-Inuit to Inuit.

An Inuit Perspective: Baker Lake Sculpture

On 1 July 2000 the Inuit Heritage Centre in Baker Lake hosted the opening of an exhibition of Baker Lake sculpture from the Sarick collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In her essay for the exhibition catalogue, guest curator Marie Bouchard explained the development of the project:

> *"An Inuit Perspective" grew out of a desire to create an alternative model for understanding contemporary Inuit art, one that would release it from the aesthetic assessments and*

> *ethnographic positions imposed by a white dominant culture and examine this art form instead with the cross-cultural framework that defines it.*

The artists themselves chose their own works from the Sarick collection, and works representing the deceased artists were chosen by the artists' relatives and the other artists. The carvers were also instrumental in determining the format of the exhibition installation, as Bouchard describes:

> *They expressed a desire to have their work placed next to or in proximity to other carvers to whom they were related or had carved with. It was decided to use individual pedestals, arranged in a loose circular layout, to reflect the communal approach used in the selection process and to present each carver's contribution within the context of the greater whole. The carvers also chose to incorporate traditional music into the exhibition space ... to convey a strong sense of "Inuitness" into the exhibition process.*

Bouchard interviewed the various artists and held discussions with them. Her insightful catalogue essay provides substantial factual information and also deals with several subjects that have been neglected or distorted in the presentation of Inuit art in the past. She discusses the aesthetics and economics of Inuit art and describes the effect that different arts advisors have had over the years on the making of sculpture. In total, it is a consummate and refreshing examination of the Baker Lake art scene in the context of the early twenty-first century.

The Future

Judging by this conference and the Baker Lake sculpture exhibition discussed above, it is clear that in the future, Inuit artists will be involved to a greater degree in all aspects of their exhibitions. There will likely be more museum personnel and artists traveling between the North and South. One aspect that was not discussed at the conference was the use of artists-in-residence programs as a way of increasing cross-cultural interaction. The ongoing artists-in-residence program at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, which began during the summer of 1999 when we had two major Inuit exhibitions on at the same time, was rewarding for both gallery visitors and artists. The public enjoyed watching and talking to a working artist, and the artists were pleased that such interest was taken in all aspects of the carving process. Some of the conversations were all in English, and some involved an interpreter.

Usually an older carver was accompanied by another carver who spoke English directly on his own behalf and acted as interpreter for the elder.

The process of verbal exchange was addressed by Michael Massie in his panel presentation:

> *I think that what we have to do is we also have to look at the way that we sit and we talk about Inuit art. If you were to have this kind of conference in the Northwest Territories you would have the audience asleep by now – I'm not saying that what you guys are doing is boring, don't get me wrong. I'm just saying that you'd have to take a completely different approach. When I first went up to the Northwest Territories to teach in 1993, I had all kinds of expectations of what I was going to teach, how I was going to teach. I was looking at it in perspective of coming out of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and how things were taught up there. But when I got up North I had a quick, a major, slap in the face of: wake up, this is not exactly how it is going to work. So I think what we have to do is we have to seriously look at how we are going to talk to people, how we are going to get the message across to people.*

In addition to adjusting the format, style, and method of talking to people in the North, we need to look to the interaction between exhibitions and their audiences. Christine Lalonde raised the issue of audience research in her presentation: "To my knowledge no significant audience research has been done. I believe that we have no real and current idea of the presumptions our visitors bring with them." Later in the discussion period, Ruth B. Phillips spoke about the cultural translation that takes place in presenting objects from one culture to those of another:

> *There are big institutions in Southern cities, their audiences are largely non-Native, non-Aboriginal, non-Inuit. People want to see these objects. I start from the premise that it is a good thing for them to be seen because it opens doors not only to aesthetic appreciation but, for me it's even more important, for the possibility of having a conversation about translation, about different cultures; it opens discussions that wouldn't happen otherwise. And a lot of what we're talking about is what's the best way to open that conversation. What are we trying to achieve by doing*

> *it? Is it just letting people have an opportunity to enjoy the beauties of the object? Is it that we want people to understand the way of life that produced those images? I think you have to start from the premiss that there is no perfect translation if you are going to be showing these [Inuit] objects in the South.*

In continuing that discussion, Christine Lalonde related an experience she had had with an exhibition of Pangnirtung prints and drawings at the National Gallery. The exhibition focused on aspects of contact with outsiders – such as the Hudson's Bay post and whaling stations – rather than the more traditional subjects. Yet visitors, when asked what they saw in the works, replied, "I see hunting scenes; I see the way the Inuit have survived in the North." As Lalonde explained

> *I was kind of surprised because I worked so hard to make sure that this was about something other than that and it made me just realize that they're not necessarily getting the translation we're giving them; they bring their presumptions. And I guess that's why my third point was about audience response and understanding presumptions people bring and whether we do alter them at all. And I think that more audience research is an important component of us being better translators.*

During the discussion period, there were several comments about dialogue: how to know what other people in the field were doing; how to keep up with research and experiments in exhibition display; how to share information. In response to this, and to how things have been handled in the past, Michael Massie said:

> *I think it's time to start collaborating, all those galleries of Inuit art, universities, museums, and say okay let's put together what we have – to actually see what we have. Let's see what is true, let's see what's not so true and let's try and straighten up. I think there are a lot of barriers between galleries, artists, museums and everything that have to disappear.*

Richard Fung ended the panel discussion with a call for an active imagination. "Because I notice both here and yesterday there is a certain kind of assumption that there is a certain kind of stability in who the decision makers are, in who the curators are, who the experts are and who the audiences are. And one part of a process like this is hopefully to change that."

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Dispelling the Affinities of the Tribal, *the* Modern, *and the* Contemporary

Weaving Stories of Art

Delores Churchill

In *The Story of Art* (1984, 3) E. H. Gombrich states, "There really is no such thing as art, there are only artists." In the Haida language, there is no word for art, but an artist is called "gifted." Gombrich says very little about Aboriginal art in his books. He does note that "Sometimes they [Native people] even believe that certain animals are related to them in some fairy tale manner and that the whole tribe is a wolf tribe, a raven tribe or a frog tribe (22)." He also writes, "We may see only a jumble of ugly masks, but to the native, this pole illustrated an old legend of his tribe (27)." What of Darwin's theory that mankind evolved from monkeys?

In *Indian Basketry: Studies in a Textile Art without Machinery* Otis Tufton Mason wrote, "What are the causes that have led to the rapid decadence of the art of basketry? There can be but one broad answer and that is the iconoclastic effect of our civilization upon a simple-hearted people. The Amerind [Mason's name for Indian people] is not far-sighted, his reasoning faculties are not as highly developed as ours" (Mason 1904, 226). This was written in 1902, at a time when Aboriginal people in Canada were not permitted to go past the eighth grade and no more than four Aboriginal people were allowed in a government building at the same time. It is very difficult to overcome the perceptions that Euro-Americans have documented about Aboriginal art.

There has to be more communication, not just with museums but also with art galleries. As long as Native art remains in museums, it will be thought of in the past tense.

Because of my work in basketry, I will try to address a few of many issues that pertain to this art. Yes, basketry is an art form. We will always have weavers who are artists and others who weave just for fun.

The large beautiful baskets of the past will never be replicated. I have known many gifted weavers. When I see a large Tlingit basket, I remember Jennie Thlinaut weaving so fast that her fingers flew across the warp with the weft strands. It was as wonderful as watching a ballet. She started weaving baskets as a small child. She learned

Chilkat weaving as a young woman and was the last of the great Chilkat weavers. She was a full-blooded Tlingit. Ida Katashan is a Tlingit basket weaver. She is the last traditional basket weaver. She also learned as a child. To become a great weaver, you must start as a child, just as a great ballet dancer has to start as a child, unless you are as gifted a dancer as Agnes de Mille, who began to study as a teenager.

My mother, Selina Harris Adams Peratrovich, learned to weave from her mother-in-law. She was criticized for teaching basketry, not just by Haidas, but by other Native people. In fact, when she was going to teach a class in Haida hat weaving at Ketchikan Community College, I cautioned her that she would make more enemies. She insisted that it was important for everyone who was interested to know how difficult it was to harvest and prepare the material and weave. She told me that a gallery owner told her that her prices were too high. She invited the owner to take a class – in fact, she said to that individual, "You might make your own to sell." After taking the class, the gallery owner said: "Selina, you don't charge enough."

There is little understanding of the work involved in producing Spruce root basketry. There is an art to material preparation. To get enough spruce root for a small basket (6 cm x 6 cm in height) takes two hours collecting, two hours cooking in a very hot open fire, and then another sixteen hours of preparation before the basket is even started. The spruce root can only be collected where there are no rocks, stones, or other plants and vegetation. The roots must be growing in sand or glacial silt. They are best when collected in early spring. The weaver spends a lot of money to reach those areas. It is getting more difficult to collect basketry material due to regulations on private and public land.

Learning to split and prepare the roots takes many years of practice. The weaver is only as good as her material preparation. Selina made me burn my baskets for five years. She said: "I am well known for my baskets. If you say you learned from me, you better be good." In fact, when I was entering a show, she said: "Put my name on it. You aren't preparing your own material." Needless to say, I did not enter. And when the local community college asked me to teach an evening class, Selina told me that I had to learn material preparation before I could teach. She made me practice for two more years.

What is art and what is craft? Galleries need to learn more about basketry. A basket is an art piece – when the roots are uniform in size, the weaving and tension are uniform. That doesn't mean it has to be twenty warp ends to the inch. It takes longer to learn to split bigger weavers (or weft) and warp than to prepare fine weavers. All you have to do is run the fine root between your thumb and index finger applying pressure several times and it will split in half. The basket must have harmony, artistic form and balance.

Displaying Aboriginal art without the artist's name is a practice that has to stop. Can you imagine a Monet painting without his signature? This is not only the fault of the museum and gallery. I can remember being told by my grandmother not to put my name on my work at school. She said this was a sign of bragging and we had to stay humble. I had to write my mother's resumé without her knowledge. She was appalled to see her name by baskets that were commissioned from her by the Alaska program "Art in Public Places" for the ferry, HM Taku.

I watched a juror at a show compare a twined spruce root basket and a coiled grass basket. He held the spruce basket to the light. Of course, he could see a little light through the base. Spruce root shrinks when dry but that same basket will swell and be waterproof with just a sprinkle of a little water. The weavers that make waterproof spruce root baskets use double warp. Then they rub the inner fibres of the basket with a grizzly bear tooth. This rubbing spreads the fibres. The juror disqualified the spruce root basket. It was an exquisite basket with false embroidery design using maidenhair fern (the most difficult material to weave with). He gave the prize to the coiled grass basket. He couldn't see light through that basket. Grass doesn't shrink as much as spruce root. The design on the coiled grass basket was dyed with Kool-Aid.

I once managed a Native art store. Flora Mather, a Tsimshian master weaver, had her baskets in the shop. The customers would go right past Flora's beautiful baskets and buy baskets woven by another weaver. These baskets were lumpy and crude, but the customers called these baskets "primitive."

Native people have an aesthetic sense that transcends the actual object. For instance, the "Mother Basket" from Klukwan is a large basket woven by master weavers, average weavers and some beginners. It is a clan basket. It is thought to be so precious that it is only brought out on very special occasions.

There is a wonderful hat at the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois. A curator said to me: "Isn't that awful?" I looked at this finely woven spruce root hat and I could picture this Tlingit weaver having a wonderful time replicating a straw hat she probably saw in a catalogue.

Baskets were also used for other purposes than utilitarian. My mother gave me a spruce root hat with two rings on top. She made me promise that I would give a dinner in Massett, the village of her birth, after her death. She also wanted me to have a tea party in Ketchikan, Alaska where she had many friends. I was to give her collection of bone china cups to all her friends. I could not use the spruce root hat until I fulfilled this promise.

Nathan Jackson, a Tlingit master carver, carved a hat for which he commissioned Selina to weave a spruce root ring representing Haida. Then he had me weave the

Tlingit Spruce root ring and the Tsimshian red cedar bark ring. This hat was presented by the Sealaska Heritage Foundation to Abraham Weisbrott, an attorney who helped win the land claim suit for the Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian people in Southeast Alaska.

Primrose Adams asked Selina to teach her to weave Potlatch rings. Selina said her eyesight was no longer good enough – she recommended that I teach Primrose. In exchange for the lessons, Primrose wove a spruce root hat for me.

I felt very possessive over basketry until I attended a basketry conference in Toronto called "Basketry Focus." There were weavers from all over the world – Germany, Japan, Korea, Peru were just a few of the countries represented. I think it is time to include some of these wonderful weavers in galleries, too. You would be surprised at the vitality and contemporary expression of artists such as Ankaret Dean, John McQueen, Jane Sauer, and Cass Schorsch.

I cannot be too harsh on E. H. Gombrich. I remember, as a child, the terror I had of totem poles. No one explained what they were, and the older people cried when they went to Yan or Kiusta where the old poles were located. I didn't learn until I was older that many people died of small pox in those villages. It was not until I read Bill Holm's book *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* (1965) that I finally understood this art form and learned to appreciate it.

And poor old Otis Tufton Mason. I guess he and his contemporaries thought Native people would never learn to read. "As you gaze on the Indian basket maker at work," one of his colleague writes, "herself frequently unkempt, her garments the coarsest, her home and surroundings suggestive of anything but beauty, you are amazed (James 1903, 221)." My friend Gerri Kennedy came to my house one morning – I hadn't dressed, I was still in my pajamas, I hadn't combed my hair. She said: "Ha, that's when they took those pictures of those poor weavers in those old books."

An Aleutic spruce root hat sold at a Sotheby's auction for over a hundred thousand dollars a few years ago. Maybe art galleries will finally wake up.

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After Essay – After Words

Doreen Jensen and Rose M. Spahan

Rose M. *Spahan*: (Tsartlip, Lower Nicola) independent curator, artist, and educator

As an invited guest to "A Working Discussion on Aboriginal Representation in the Art Gallery," I was available to facilitate a workshop on a day's notice. The workshop – "Dispelling Affinities of the Tribal, the Modern and the Contemporary" – focused on issues arising from the intersection of Euro-Canadian art and Aboriginal art in a mainstream gallery setting.

From the beginning of this meeting – attended by artists, curators, academics, anthropologists, and historians – I was struck with a feeling of reassurance at being included in this discussion, and also by the fact that, as a First Nations independent curator, I am very new. Among the people that attended were familiar faces I have seen at First Peoples art conferences, festivals and gallery openings. When I was asked to write a response to the discussion, I thought it would be informative to work with a well-respected curator, educator and artist so I could learn from an admired colleague in the field.

Doreen Jensen: (Gitxsan) educator, artist, and independent curator

When I received the invitation to attend the workshop series at the Vancouver Art Gallery, I was excited because I felt that it was time this dialogue between First Nations artists, curators, educators and public institutions finally took place. Since I have spent most of my adult life trying to improve awareness and understanding of Canadian Aboriginal art and artists in public institutions, I am happy to voice my concerns. We are still struggling to overcome the government ban of all our cultural traditions, including the arts. This ban was lifted in 1951. It has taken much work by many people to get us to where we are today. Our "arts" are giving us back our spirit and our self-esteem – for us, they are a valuable tool. This is why it is important that our work be exhibited in publicly-funded institutions.

Rose: The first public gallery exhibition that I worked on was at the Richmond Art Gallery. I received a Canada Council First Peoples curatorial residency to compile an exhibition of emerging Salish artists to coincide with a travelling art exhibition from Australia. The inclusion of Salish artists was intended to honour the ancient protocol of the land on which the Richmond Art Gallery is situated. I invited thirteen Salish artists from Saarich, Songhees, Cowichan, Nanaimo, Pauchachin, Squamish, and Musqueam in Canada, and from Lummi in the United States. The Musqueam and Squamish people presided over the opening ceremonies and welcomed the Australians to our territories. The mayor of Richmond seemed a little put out because he was not the first speaker. According to ancient protocol, I had arranged for the chiefs and relevant spokespeople to speak first because it is very important to honour the people of the territories in which the celebrations are situated.

Doreen: In her presentation, Wendy Brady said that in Australia the non-indigenous curators have complained that Australian Aboriginal people are difficult to work with because they have certain protocols that they must honour. Western understanding of protocol is different, and as a result, some curators "go into a freeze." They are so afraid to offend, they won't even challenge themselves. Wendy said: "It doesn't matter if you offend – it is how you behave when you find you have offended that is important. There needs to be expansion of mind and practice in order for us to move forward."

Rose: I believe that when someone asks for your opinion on issues of protocol, it is understood that your answers will be followed and not questioned. As a contemporary artist and curator, I understand that exhibiting our art in galleries is part of educating the public. We have a responsibility to the artists, the culture, and the art. Providing information about ourselves is part of why we exhibit. As a First Nations curator, I enjoy exhibiting emergent artists. The new work of young artists speaks of new dreams and of what is happening in today's world. What is important for you to convey in exhibitions?

Doreen: That there are living First Nation artists and that their voices be heard. I would like to reflect on Aaron Glass's comments about art, craft, and artifact, and the distinctions that have been made between them. He drew attention to "the historical complexities of objects and the sense that they have very different values and different contexts that are fluid and shifting. Modern exhibit practice can honour those complex histories without essentializing." We need to honour difference without patronizing and without creating double standards. We need to value the differences.

Rose: In your eyes, what is the ideal relationship between First Nations art and mainstream museums and galleries?

Doreen: It would be a relationship in which our cultural knowledge is acknowledged and respected. The ideal relationship within institutions would include First Nations artists in mandates and budgets. Debates need to be reactivated. Independent curatorial projects need to be planned with fully-funded research fellowships.

Rose: My experience as a Canada Council curatorial resident was quite challenging. The exhibition was a success and was well attended. I felt satisfied with my work and found it to be a terrific learning experience. "Embrace the Visionaries" was the first exhibition of contemporary Salish work hosted by the Richmond Art Gallery, and the combination of traditional and contemporary media created the feeling of a living, breathing culture throughout the show. It was assumed that curatorial residencies would lead to permanent positions and that there was commitment on the part of museums and galleries to hire residents after their training period was completed. It didn't happen. Is this poor use of funds by institutions and free labour for galleries? Is this classic behavior, or what?

Doreen: We have much work to do to reclaim our being, our spirits, our arts, and our language. Institutions, funding agencies, and governments need to view indigenous people as a positive presence in society. We need to be visible in work places – as curators, clerks, or CEOs. We need to rebuild the way that museums and galleries convey messages about us.

Rose: We are responsible for passing on accurate information about the works in exhibitions and surrounding programs. This is what we know and why we get hired for First Nations shows. During the panel discussion, Delores Churchill asked Bill McLennan what he would think of whites doing Indian art. He responded that there is no soul in appropriated work.

Doreen: Bill McLennan made some interesting remarks concerning authenticity. He reminded us that with First Nations objects and history, there are many kinds of authenticities. Technical authenticity, as evidenced in paint chips for instance, might determine who created the object; oral history speaks about another truth by recording the families who own it. Yet it seems to me that those of us working in the field often disregard such important avenues of research; Frederick Alexee, an important turn-of-the-century Tsimshian artist, for instance, has living relatives who can shed light on a question concerning the history of the artist's work. I think it is important that we listen closely to those around us who can contribute to our understanding of First Nations objects and history.

Rose: Yes, it's important that what is being spoken about is heard and put into some kind of positive action. I hope what is spoken about here does not fall on deaf ears. Do you find these kinds of panels useful?

Doreen: Yes, because they provide an opportunity to discuss issues that are important to all of us.

Rose: I work with contemporary artists and you work with traditionally-based exhibitions. What advice do you have to pass on to me?

Doreen: I think it is wonderful that you are working with contemporary artists! It is important to remember where our artistic expression comes from. Contemporary artists need to understand the foundation of our traditional arts. Even though some artists choose to work in other media, it is necessary to honour the history of the ancestors. When she spoke of protocol in her introductory remarks in Vancouver, Debra Sparrow said she feels strongly that we must not forget our elders and their strong voices. All grandfathers have voices, whether they are First Nations or Scottish.

Rose: Curatorship and artistic perspective is a personal vision – maybe an agenda, a mandate, or at the very least, a prerogative. Walking through this world, we, as Aboriginal people, have the gift of being born indigenous. We protect and preserve through many ways our art, prayer, language, songs, and family. This is what makes us so interesting, and maybe even fashionable.

I remember, when I attended the University of Victoria, hearing Dr. Victoria Wyatt comment on the simple fact that First Nations people did not wake up in the morning and say, "I am going to make art today" – art was the way of life. Today, I wake up and say I have to put together a proposal for a show.

Doreen: I am at the stage of my life where I would like to spend more time doing my own art. Today when I woke up, I thought, "I wish I was going to the studio to do some art." Instead, I am here trying to recall my emotions about the conference at the Vancouver Art Gallery and struggling to conquer my fear of technology as I peck away at the old computer.

Rose: In the recent history of museum and gallery exhibitions, what shows do you find most effective? During the workshop series, Jeff Thomas commented that the tone of past exhibitions lingers and sometimes perpetuates stasis. He said that his role as a curator is to stop this kind of non-movement. What motivates your involvement in exhibiting and curating?

Doreen: When I have an opportunity to curate an exhibition, I guess what motivates me is the fact that we have survived and we need to move on to create traditionally-based art that speaks of our presence now. I am also excited by the fact that displaying art in public institutions today is not so different from how it was done traditionally. Works of art were created and music and performances were composed to tell the history of the family who commissioned them. Orators would speak of the connection to the land and the spirit of the piece. Many high-ranking guests would be invited to "witness" the events.

Rose: Addressing the issues of dispelling affinities, Northwest Coast arts are on the forefront of art scene. I know the difference between Salish work and Northwest Coast work, but the general public really does not differentiate our multifarious traditions. Why do you think this is? How can we as curators help to correct this kind of misinterpretation?

Doreen: We need to go to our elders for specific information regarding some of the arts. We need to keep ourselves informed so that we can pass on relevant information. Workshops informing the general public about the different styles of Northwest Coast art are always welcome events.

Rose: After all is said and done and we come to a perfect place of understanding, what lasting impression do you wish for?

Doreen: That future generations of artists will stand side by side as equals.

Rose: Working in the arts is a privilege and an honour as Aboriginal, indigenous, First Nations people. If we expect or want to work with galleries – regional, national or global – there will be potential problems that arise from the intersection of Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal art in a mainstream gallery setting. As long as we have continuous open dialogue and as long as there is an effort to act on recommendations, I believe we can walk forward with class and integrity.

Doreen: Working in the arts has been a life-long privilege for me. I have used the arts as a means of communicating who we are and what our world views are. The arts have served as a bridge to other cultures as well. The Vancouver Art Gallery devotes permanent space to an installation of work by Emily Carr, her contemporaries, and artists whose work is seen to be influenced by her. At the Art Gallery of Ontario, the work of Emily Carr, like that of the Group of Seven, is also accorded privileged status, and occupies its own gallery. In an effort to move toward an integrated display of Canadian historical art in the Canadian wing, the AGO now proposes to rework the Emily Carr gallery by creating a display of Native art related to the 1927 "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern." In both cases, Northwest Coast Aboriginal pieces displayed in or near the existing gallery space would be in danger of appearing as though in the service of Carr's work.

Rose: It is manageable if the Emily Carr works are hung in a way that complements the Northwest Coast pieces rather than overshadowing them. If the Aboriginal pieces represent the Northwest Coast strongly, then they should be able to stand on their own. It is also important to make sure that representatives from the appropriate areas are consulted, that the research is accurate and complete, and that the display shows respect. Remembering Emily Carr as part of Canadian art history through her life's work is admirable. Acknowledging that First Peoples art and culture is a living breathing entity in today's culture is necessary. We have been here since time immemorial and we exist today; we continue to celebrate our victories.

Doreen: I believe that there are many good curators who can manage to hang an exhibit of works from different cultures and make it work.

Rose: In my short time working as a curator and attending meetings, symposiums, etc, I have noticed an imbalance of representation – for instance, all artists but no political voices, lawyers, educational people, environmentalists, and so on. Do we need the presence of all our important spokespeople to make important decisions, or is that just asking for trouble?

Doreen: There is a time and place for politicians, lawyers, and educators to be involved in the meetings that are arranged by artists to address specific problems.

Rose: As we grow and change, along with our ever-evolving Canada, maybe we will look back at our experience and say, we had to start somewhere. Doreen, it has been a pleasure to work with you and I am sure we will cross paths at some point. Hske Siem.

Doreen: I want to thank you for inviting me to participate in this timely and interesting dialogue.

The Contemporary Gallery in Context

Five Suggestions for Better Living

Skawennati Tricia Fragnito

Introduction

It is incredible that in the year 2000, despite numerous attempts to the contrary, First Nations people still exist as distinct nations and are stronger than ever. The strength of a people is a function of their adaptability. Technologies and customs brought to us by Europeans – such as writing, law and a thing called art – did not serve to assimilate us. Instead, we absorbed them and have learned to use them to our advantage. We have our own writers to tell our stories. We understand the law and go to court to regain title to our lands or to ensure the correct interpretation of our treaties. And we have our own artists, whose images and ideas reflect our contemporary world. In this paper I discuss how contemporary Aboriginal artists should be represented in the art gallery using my three most recent projects, "Blanket Statements," "The People's Plastic Princess," and "CyberPowWow," as examples of how I put my theory into practice. I offer five concrete suggestions to a specific segment of Native artists and curators: those who wish to exhibit their work as widely as possible, who expect to be paid – and even earn a living – for their work, and who want their work to be the best – that is, the most challenging, experimental, and beautiful – it can be. These goals may seem obvious, but they are not held by everyone. There are people who only want their work to be seen by their own community, who believe that getting paid or receiving grants makes them sell-outs, and for whom innovation is not necessarily a top priority.

I write as a Native artist and independent curator, representing only myself. In conceptualizing art and exhibitions, a job I enjoy immensely, I hope to effect change in Canadian cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, and funding agencies – institutions that will in turn help to improve the careers and, ultimately, the artwork of Aboriginal artists. Native people have had to fight for our place in the Canadian art scene, just as we have had to fight for everything else we have. The First People's Secretariat at the Canada Council for the Arts and the Aboriginal Arts Programme at The Banff Centre for the Arts (including the designated annual Native exhibition at the Walter Phillips Gallery – one of only six slots) are two examples of hard-won victories resulting from the tireless work of Indian artists and activists who came before me. Without those battles I know I would not even have the privilege of making my suggestions, and so I would like to acknowledge this fact and thank them for their efforts. I should also stipulate here that I support equity programmes that offer training and other opportunities to Native people and visible minorities. They are excellent structures on which we must build so that we can continue to become stronger, more self-sufficient artists whose work can be shown anywhere from the most Native-specific venue, such as Urban Shaman gallery in Winnipeg, to international extravaganzas such as "Documenta," in Kassel, Germany, and the Venice Biennale.

As co-founder of the artist collective *Nation to Nation* (www.nation2nation.org) established in 1994, I have gained some insight into the needs of Native contemporary artists, and have developed opinions about the future of our community. I believe the following five suggestions will help us to become better, more professional, and more confident artists in a stronger, more supportive and more open community.

1. Any art made by a Native person is Native art.
2. Exclusively Aboriginal group shows should be less frequent and more focused.
3. Opportunities for solo shows for Native artists should increase.
4. Native curators should include non-Native artists in their practices.
5. Non-Native curators should include Native artists in their practices.

Once and For All: What Is Native Art?

Over twenty years ago, Fritz Scholder said, "The American Indian artist, like everyone else, lives in 1979 ... and must cope with that fact in his work. An Indian artist must have the freedom to do anything he wants ... like every other artist" (Highwater 1980, 177). It is unfortunate that an artist has to make this argument at all. Scholder is almost pleading for a right that non-Native artists do not even question. Worse is the fact that many of us are still making the same statement today, over twenty years later. Native artists often feel limited by their ethnic designation, even while they are proud of it. But Native art does not have to depict Indians or ceremonies or mythologies in order to be authentic. As Jamake Highwater states,

> *What is "Indian" about Indian painting is not the depiction of Indian scenes, but the mentality that underlies the whole process by which the work of art comes into existence. And that characteristic mentality is also capable of drastic, modernist change without any necessary loss of "Indianness." Culture is dynamic. Tradition is also dynamic, not static.*
>
> Highwater (1980, 177)

If I create an image – any image – I cannot separate it from the fact that my mother is Mohawk, or that my father is Italian, or that I am a woman. The conception of that image came from a mind that has been shaped by those, and many other, factors. Therefore, any image that I make is Native art, because I am Native. People's real experiences are far more exciting than the stories they are told they should tell. While it is interesting and important to illustrate our mythologies, it is so much more intriguing and insightful to tell our personal stories, the histories of how we survived, who we are now, and what we love or hate or fear or desire. For example, many of us have a non-Native parent, spouse or child. Why does so little of our work reflect this fact? Why, for instance, do adopted kids not make art about being adopted? This is work I want to see. There is such a wealth of emotion, politics, adventure, and information inherent in our lives that it would be difficult not to make some thought-provoking art. What is more, as Paul Chaat Smith writes,

> *Silence about our own complicated histories supports the colonizer's idea that the only real Indians are full-blooded, from a reservation, speak their language, and practice the religion of their ancestors. Even though this represents a small number of us as a whole, and fits few or none of us plying the trades of artist, or writer, or activist, we often consciously and unconsciously try to play this part drilled into us by the same Hollywood movies non-Indians get their ideas from .*
>
> Smith (1994)

I believe the main reason artists are not doing this kind of work is that they know there is a good chance they will lose their Native status if they do. I am not referring to government here; I am referring to a fear that our own artistic community will cast us out. We have seen again and again what Native art is supposed to look like or what it should be about. We have also heard statements such as this one by artist Jackson Beardy: "If you're an Indian and an artist, you're not necessarily an Indian artist" (Gray 1993, 143). With an authoritative declaration like that, who would not be afraid to deviate from the "aboriginally correct" norm? It is enough to make you want to drop the "Native" from your artist bio. But that only shrinks our already tiny community, and certainly in our case, we need all the people we can get. There is strength in numbers. I propose that if you are Indian and an artist, you are automatically an Indian artist. If the work has integrity and honesty, it will win.

The Time for Exclusively Native Group Exhibitions Is Over.

Placing First Nations artists together in an exclusive group exhibition perpetuates an otherness that is ultimately counterproductive to our careers. This was not always the case. Group exhibitions such as "In the Shadow of the Sun" (Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1989), "Indigena" (Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1992), "Land, Spirit, Power" (National Gallery of Canada, 1992), and "New Territories" (Montréal and Quebec City, 1992), were extremely important. They made First Nations contemporary art accessible to a wider public and created a forum for critical discussion. They proved that Native people create challenging, thought-provoking art. As Gerald McMaster writes in the introduction to the collection of essays that accompanied "In the Shadow of the Sun": "[The exhibition] provided the first-ever comprehensive view of both contemporary Indian and Inuit art history ... It inaugurated a new-style museum for contemporary Native expressions without any apologetics" (McMaster 1993, xi). However, these exhibitions featured dozens of artists, each of whom was represented by only one or perhaps two artworks. At that time such all-inclusiveness was necessary – both to demonstrate the breadth of Native contemporary art and to galvanize a community of Native contemporary artists – but now it makes more sense for First Nations group exhibitions to be smaller, either in number of artists, so that audiences can better appreciate individual practices, or perhaps in scope. In the past, a general survey of Native art was a sufficient and even ground-breaking excuse for an exhibition, but today, with the evolution of curatorial practice from (supposedly) objective conservationism to an admittedly subjective exploration, artists should expect to be invited to participate in exhibitions with provocative themes. "Nations in Urban Landscapes" (Oboro, 1996), a three-(Native-)person show featuring Eric Robertson, Faye Heavyshield, and Shelley Niro, is an excellent example of such curatorial evolution. Curator Marcia Crosby unabashedly "locate[d] First Nations in an urban landscape" recognizing "the importance and legitimacy of the hybrid histories that arose out of their displacement" (Crosby 1996). Crosby had a specific point to make and the resulting exhibition provided a context in which the art could be viewed in a more directed way, benefiting both artist and audience.

First Nations artists can also fit nicely into group exhibitions that have intriguing, not-necessarily-Native themes. The Dunlop Art Gallery's 1999 show, "Fluffy" (not to be confused with the popular "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibition produced in 1988 by the Woodlands Cultural Centre) went even further in this direction. The aim of

"Fluffy" was to question "cuteness" as a cultural signifier. Exhibition curator Anthony Kiendl invited Ryan Rice to be one of an international group of seventeen artists – , and the only Native participant – because of Rice's clan animal series in which the turtle, wolf, and bear (which represent the three major clans of Kahnawake) are depicted as cuddly cartoon characters. Says Kiendl: "Each artist in the show has a particular interest in cuteness for their own reasons. I was interested in what cuteness means to [Rice] as an Indian. Is 'The Native American' commodified and turned into little toys and sold back to people and objectified just to make Indians less intimidating and perhaps more controllable? Also, there has been a long history of equating Native Americans with animals and nature … in contrast to the 'once proud warrior,' why is a fuzzy bear or cartoon turtle so funny and out of context?" (Kiendl 2000). Rice was able to add another dimension to "Fluffy" with his unique point of view.

As was the case when "In the Shadow of the Sun" opened, the time has again come to move forward unapologetically. If we are to evolve as artists, we must also be willing, comfortable, and able to show our work in larger contexts. If we continue to show exclusively in the safety of our own limited community, we do ourselves a disservice in several ways. First, the number of exhibitions to which we are invited will remain as low as it is now (or even decrease), because most galleries and artist-run centres in Canada mount no more than one "Native" show a year. Second, and more important, we limit our peer group. Instead of counting all artists as our peers, we have only ourselves to talk to and learn from. We risk becoming an insular community, dealing with issues that affect only Native people rather than the population as a whole. Limiting our subject matter weakens us as artists. Yet the converse is also true. Our Aboriginal cultural perspective informs and enriches any topic we explore.

More Solo Shows for Native Artists

Native artists need solo shows. A solo exhibition is great for your resumé, and for good reason. It means that you have developed your practice to the point where you have an artistic statement to make (and to put into a press release), and you have enough work to fill a gallery. It means that you have lived through the responsibility and stress that only a solo show can evince. Also, a solo show demonstrates that your work can stand on its own, creating its own context. And it is the artist who determines what that context is.

The Indian Art Centre in Ottawa is a good example of an institution that is creating career-building opportunities for First Nations artists. Its artist-in-residence programme includes a solo exhibition for the artist (selected by a jury), along with a commissioned curatorial essay by a Native writer and the purchase of an artwork.

In 2000 the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff used their Aboriginal slot to present "The Presence of Our Absence," an exhibition of works by Richard Ray Whitman curated by Paul Chaat Smith (www.banffcentre.ab.ca/wpg/whitman). These two institutions have not only addressed the need for more opportunities for solo shows, but also provided an excellent example for others to follow.

Include a Non-Native Artist in Your Next Show

If you are a Native curator, do not limit yourself to Native artists or topics. Expand your roster. It can only lead to more jobs. The exhibit "Blanket Statements" (www.banffcentre.ab.ca/wpg/past/blanket.htm), held in February 1999 at the Walter Phillips Gallery in collaboration with the Aboriginal Arts programme at The Banff Centre for the Arts, was my first curatorial project within an institution. I was aware that it could also be my only curatorial project at Banff and, if that were the case, I wanted it to be a good one. The idea for the show originated as a response to the November 1998 exhibition, "To Honor and Comfort: Native Quilting Traditions," at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York. The power of "To Honor and Comfort" was that it showed how quilting has been a community-strengthening activity among Native Americans since contact.

However, viewers of the exhibition would never know that there are Indians who use quilting as their medium of expression – that is to say, there were no art quilts in the show. I wanted to address that lack with "Blanket Statements." Since the exhibition was slated for the Aboriginal slot of the Walter Phillips program, my original plan was to invite only Native artists, but as I began to better understand both the role of a curator, and the responsibility and authority that accompany the title, I came to a realization: I did not want to be limited to Native content. I wanted the exhibition to be about art quilts, not about Native quilters. I wanted to show, in a gallery setting, how the tradition of quilting, which First Nations people have adopted from European culture, is being incorporated into contemporary artistic practice. As I did my research, it became clear that it was absolutely necessary to put Native and non-Native artists side by side because the different quilting traditions informed and complimented each other.

The resulting exhibition, "Blanket Statements," featured four diverse artists whose work is of the highest calibre: Jean Hewes's oversize quilts are whimsical fabric assemblages, hybrids between painting, drawing, and quilting; Clarissa Hudson works in the button-blanket robe tradition of the Northwest coast, incorporating imagery from dreams as well as from daily life in her untraditional creations; Barbara Todd uses the history and meaning of the quilt as a metaphor for protection, security, and sleep; Margaret Wood translates Native American material culture into quilts.

The exhibition title, which referred to the artists' use of blankets to get their messages across, also had a private meaning for me: Don't make generalizations about Native curators.

It was more difficult to arrive at what should have been an obvious decision to invite non-Natives to participate in CyberPowWow 2K. CyberPowWow (www.nation2nation.org/cyber.htm) is an ongoing project that began in 1996, just as the World Wide Web was becoming popular. It began as a Web page, but has since blossomed into a "palace" – a graphical chat room in which people converse with one another in real time. The CyberPowWow palace comprises a virtual gallery and library furnished with art and texts by Native artists and writers. The idea was to use the Web to connect a community of artists spread across the continent. The ultimate, successful result of the project would be an artist-run centre in virtual space where Native artists could show their work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to a potentially huge international audience who could both ask questions and offer comments and criticism. In the two evolutions of CyberPowWow (CPW) so far, all participants were Native because we wanted to fight the prejudice that Native artists were technically illiterate. In fact, for the first CPW, we mostly were! Two of the three pieces commissioned for the virtual exhibition were not created using new technologies, but were *about* new technologies. By the time CPW 2 (1999) was mounted, we had gathered a group of Native artists who were familiar with new technologies. We built the palace collaboratively using programmes such as Photoshop and Iptscrae (a scripting language customized for the Palace software). With CPW 2, we reached a level of comfort not only with the medium but also, I think, with the scope of the project. We felt that we had carved out a self-determined space in the new territory of cyberspace. It finally became clear to co-curator Archer Pechawis and me that if we believed that our collective work was strong enough to be in the international arena, one of our aims should be to explicitly and proactively demarginalize ourselves. That meant inviting not just Native artists. CyberPowWow 2K, the newest evolution of the project, will include ten Web-friendly digital artists from Canada, the United States and Australia who have been asked to create work about place, real or imagined, where Native meets non-Native.

Include a Native Artist in Your Next Show

In order for our utopian future to materialize, we need help. Just as suffragists needed men to vote for their enfranchisement, we need non-Native curators in this country to make an effort to include First Nations artists in the exhibitions they develop, either by including us in group shows or, if their curatorial practice is centred around solo shows, by considering Native artists for solo shows.

And we need to help these curators. It seems that only the bravest non-Native curators include Indians in their shows. I think we scare them, and perhaps we may even do it a little on purpose. We make them think (or perhaps we actually believe) that they cannot understand our work if they themselves have no Native blood. This attitude keeps us on the fringes instead of at centre stage where we belong.

One good excuse for a curator to exclude First Nations artists might be that there are not many artists making the kind of work in which the curator is interested. I thought I would face this situation in developing "The People's Plastic Princess" (www.banffcentre.ab.ca/wpg/ppp/default.htm) – the first exhibition I curated that was not contextualized as explicitly Native in content.

"The People's Plastic Princess," shown in October 1999 at the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff, was a group exhibition that brought together painting, photography, sculpture, and digital work by twenty-one artists from Canada, the United States, and Europe to show how Barbie, the world's most popular eleven-and-a-half-inch fashion doll, can reflect society in imaginative, provocative and critical ways. For some time I had been noticing the enormous amount of "Barbie art" in existence; here was an opportunity to present it. However, in the first stages of my research it seemed that there was not an enormous amount of Barbie art being made by Indians. Rather than quietly accept that fact and not include any First Nations artists in the exhibition, I decided to commission two new works by Native artists who had an interest in Barbie. As I continued my research I found that there were indeed Native artists who had made Barbie art. The final roster of artists included twenty-one artists, five of whom were of Aboriginal ancestry and whose work was as technically proficient, as multi-levelled, and as humourous as all the others. And the show was richer for it.

Conclusion

If Native artwork is viewed in a broader context, there is a greater chance that non-Native people will get it – understand it, fund it, buy it, promote it. As Native people, we do not have enough power or money to support our artists. Also, our artists deserve the widest audience we can get. I want all kinds of people to see my work. That does not make me or my work any less Indian. I strongly believe that by curating shows that include both Native and non-Native artists, and by making art that is not expected of a Native artist, I am influencing our cultural institutions. I like to think that I am making a difference on many levels. That's why I do it.

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Negotiating Space for Aboriginal Art

Lee-Ann Martin

This paper addresses historical paradigms that continue to influence current debates around appropriate contexts for Aboriginal art within public art galleries whose distinctly Euro-Canadian parameters currently frame the presentation of artistic production in this country. The specific focus is the paradox associated with late nineteenth-century theories and practices as they relate to Aboriginal objects. Both the discipline of anthropology and ethnological museums embraced the study, classification, and presentation of Aboriginal material culture as artifacts. At the same time, art criticism, history, and theory developed with little recognition of Aboriginal arts, save for a few objects from the archaeological record that were classified as Primitive art. I suggest that this colonial legacy continues to inform the scholarship and presentation of Aboriginal art histories and contemporary art practices, and that it is only in recent years that Aboriginal curators and art historians have begun to expand the discourse beyond such colonialist parameters.

Why has Aboriginal art received only sporadic attention at best, and been excluded from most mainstream art galleries? In a study completed ten years ago for the Canada Council, I addressed the inclusion and exclusion of contemporary First Nations art in public art galleries and found that few art galleries in Canada showed any commitment to the sustained collection of Aboriginal work (Martin 1991). Since that time, we have seen increased activities related to Aboriginal art within these institutions, supported for the most part by the Canada Council through the Acquisitions Assistance and Curatorial Residency Programs. I would argue, however, that the need remains for public art institutions to further strengthen their commitment to Aboriginal art beyond the availability of targeted funding initiatives. We must combat the colonial legacy that has maintained the exclusion of Aboriginal art histories and Aboriginal contemporary art in mainstream art galleries in Canada into the twenty-first century.

Let us return to the late nineteenth century to assess the complex relationships among anthropology, art history, museology, and Aboriginal arts. At that time, Aboriginal cultural material was collected, categorized, and studied by ethnologists and anthropologists, and was housed in anthropology museums whose "very existence depended precisely on promoting the material in the collection simultaneously as fodder for the purportedly disinterested scientific and comparative study of culture, as visible 'evidence' of racial inferiority (and therefore as justification of colonial intervention), but also in their capacity as objects of aesthetic pleasure, exotic delectation, and spectacle" (Coombes 1998, 489). Since that time, historical Aboriginal objects have been defined (and devalued) in opposition to Western systems of classification; that is, they are seen as artifacts rather than art, as craft rather than fine art, as primitive rather than modern.

The history of museum development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is inextricably entwined with the history of colonialism that continues to complicate much contemporary debate about post-colonial practices and critiques of racism (Preziosi 1998, 453). "Colonialism" defined European exploration, conquest, and settlement, making spaces of its own in otherwise unknown territories. These physical and imaginary spaces reflected European values and practices. Scientists, artists, and early tourists travelled the world, returning home with "exotic" objects. The public who remained at home could view collections of these objects in newly developing museums of ethnology and history. The museums and world exhibitions that were so popular during the late nineteenth century offered the visitor not only an educational encounter, but also a direct experience of the "colonized object-world" (Mitchell 1998, 459). This world-as-exhibition reflected the European perspective, reducing the world to a system of objects – objects that were intended to offer the visitor an experience of the real but that actually served as signifiers of European ideals and values (Mitchell 1998, 460). This notion of the colonized object-world influenced both anthropology and art museums well into the twentieth century.

As anthropology developed as an academic discipline, many scholars embraced Kantian theories of formal beauty and the expression of ideas that achieved the highest ideal in art. Within this framework, Aboriginal arts were, at best, relegated to inferior categories – applied art or craft, Primitive art – or were studied within the anthropology of art (Berlo and Phillips 1998, 15). Significantly and not surprisingly, the era in which scholars embraced this preoccupation with aesthetics, art criticism, and philosophy also produced a growing interest in public art museums throughout Europe and North America (Duncan 1998, 479). The early years of the twentieth century saw the rise of the "aesthetic" museum whose ideal was "to present works of art as just that, as objects of aesthetic contemplation and not as illustrative of historical or archaeological information" (Duncan 1998, 482).

The paradox of divergent European scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic determined oppositional frameworks for Aboriginal arts collected during this period. Ethnological museums and art museums provided increased visibility for objects from Aboriginal cultures around the world. However, while the anthropologist reduced cultural material to specimens for scientific investigation and classification, the art historian reduced other material to objects of exotic aesthetic pleasure, divorced from cultural contexts and histories (Preziosi 1998, 453).

A preoccupation with cultural authenticity on the part of both ethnological museums and history museums presented another paradox for Aboriginal art collection and classification. "Authentic" objects were defined as works that were created early in a particular historic tradition, and thus free from European influences. While scholars and tourists increasingly collected, studied, and exhibited such objects in the early twentieth century, they maintained the unrealistic belief that Aboriginal peoples in North America remained untouched by the economic, social, and aesthetic changes occurring at the time. This concern with the "authentic" object revealed prevalent European preoccupations with cultural purity and with historical traditions that continued intact (despite colonial intrusions into all aspects of life for the original North Americans). In fact, until recently, Aboriginal peoples were not viewed as equal participants in a shared modernity. It is not surprising that many Aboriginal artists today reject cultural authenticity as a measurement of quality (Dubin 1999, 158).

> ***While the European artist is allowed to investigate other cultures and enrich their own work and perspective, it is expected that the artist from another culture only works in the background and with the artistic traditions connected to his or her place of origin ... If the foreign artist does not conform to this separation, he is considered inauthentic, westernized, and an imitator copyist of "what we do." The universal is "ours, the local is yours".***
>
> **Canclini (1998, 506)**

Throughout the twentieth century and continuing today, Aboriginal objects have been collected and presented in both ethnological museums and art museums. Some art historians argue that the particular institutional context is dependent upon the object's level of authenticity (Bernstein 1999, 57). Others suggest that the shift from an ethnological context to an art context effected a related shift in evaluation criteria from authenticity to quality (Mullin 1995, 168). Scholars, collectors, and informed audiences wanted not only confirmation of an art object's worth beyond its cultural context, but also professional explanations of the evidence it offered of continuity or change (Dubin 1999, 150). This situation created a need for art historians and curators to gain knowledge of Aboriginal art histories that remained, for the most part, in the realm of anthropology.

In the early twentieth century, several major art museums in Canada and the United States, including the National Gallery of Canada, attempted to exhibit historical Aboriginal objects as art. In New York, organizers of the 1931 "Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts" at the Grand Central Galleries intended a reclassification of Southwest pottery and textiles from artifact to art. The simultaneous effort to introduce New York audiences to modern paintings by Southwest Indian artists ultimately "authenticated" these paintings as artifacts rooted in historic cultural traditions (Penney and Roberts 1999, 35). Most of the early efforts to recognize and recontextualize Aboriginal work as art remained patronizing. Furthermore, such attempts reinforced contemporary debates around the dichotomy of primitive and modern. Meanwhile, with the introduction of modernist movements in art, many European and North American artists championed a redefinition of Aboriginal and African objects as art. Ironically, artists such as Pablo Picasso and Max Ernst appropriated and reworked many of the formal qualities of such objects to develop their own styles. In Canada, Emily Carr, members of the Group of Seven, and other artists embraced Aboriginal art and culture in a nationalist agenda to obscure the Western-European lineage of their work and to promote a distinctly Canadian art (Berlo and Phillips 1998, 15). However, debates surrounding nationalism were inscribed largely by notions of regionalism and the uniqueness of particular places (Mullin 1995, 171). Regions such as the Northwest Coast, the Canadian Arctic, and the American Southwest were particularly appealing both to artists and to a growing tourist industry. With the advent of the leisure and the touring classes, these places and the numerous Aboriginal communities within these regions became a focus for travellers (Jojola 1998, 173). Notions of authenticity rooted in historic cultural traditions remain an imposed value in regional markets today.

We must recognize that categories of "art" and "artifact" are the products of Western systems of classification. An artifact is an object that is detached from a culture – an "ethnographic fragment" used for study and exhibition (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991, 387). Such objects are displayed on their own, devoid of cultural context. It is an emphasis on singularity that reclassifies an object as art, suitable for exhibition. Often, "singularity" is the litmus test of art: an art object can be stripped of its context and still hold up as art, inviting appreciation rather than analysis (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991, 391). In the context of today's art museum, the modernist emphasis on singularity defines an object as art and reinforces the museum installation as a "tightly focused lens that shows a particular point of view" (Vogel 1991, 201).

What is the impact of this tightly focused lens on Aboriginal historical objects? Does the recognition of a "master" artist determine a work's definition as art? Does an object's functional utility within a culture, either past or present, diminish the quality of the object as art? Do the choices of medium and/or technique define the object within the art/artifact paradigm? How can we address Eurocentric parameters that continue to frame the current classification, collection, and presentation practices in mainstream art galleries?

Today, much scholarship, including exhibitions of Aboriginal art, continues to reflect the values and perspectives of Eurocentric scholars and curators. "For at least a century, scholars, writers, and [art] historians have neglected Native Americans in writing the [art] history of America" (Fixico 1998, 85). In Canada, there are many trained and experienced Aboriginal art curators, but few universities or museums have made a commitment to hire them on a permanent basis. Recently, art historians proposed an inclusive definition of historical Aboriginal aesthetics that combines both Western and Aboriginal criteria – such as visual pleasure in things made well and imaginatively, skill in handling materials, functional utility, and ritual correctness (Berlo and Phillips 1998, 9). While an inclusive approach is commendable, Aboriginal academics, artists, and curators must develop the necessary scholarship to correct the inequities inherent in Western frameworks of authority. As Aboriginal historian Deborah Doxtator points out, "The relatively recent categorization of art forms such as basket, bead, and quill as art objects within an hierarchical Euro-North American art aesthetic side-steps the recognition of Native aesthetics and conceptual systems as viable ways of understanding art (Doxtator 1996, 17). Museum director and curator Tom Hill reinforces this perspective. "We need our own historians, ethno-historians, museum directors, archaeologists, art historians, and interpreters to stabilize those conceptual frameworks so our culture too can evolve and be dynamic" (Hill 1996, 26).

How can Aboriginal art histories be presented in mainstream art galleries today? This process requires much more than a simple redefinition of creative historical work of Aboriginal peoples from artifact to art. We need to recognize that "the processes by which artifacts become art offer no refuge from inequality" (Mullin 1995, 186). There are numerous challenges and issues that affect the contextualizing of Aboriginal historical art within mainstream art galleries. Currently, most Aboriginal historical objects are located not in the collections of art galleries, but rather in private collections, in anthropology and history museums, and to a lesser extent, in Aboriginal communities. Art galleries must develop strategies for partnerships with these museums and communities in order to develop exhibitions of historic art and to present the diverse, continuous artistic traditions of Aboriginal peoples. Donations from private collections or the availability of a travelling exhibition allow for occasional presentations of Aboriginal historical art, but the practice of isolated and sporadic exhibitions of these works often essentializes the art and thus limits an understanding of the art history. Curators must learn to contextualize this art both within an Aboriginal art history and a Canadian art history in order not to essentialize it. Also, as Aboriginal contemporary artists draw increasingly upon histories and traditions from their cultures, curators must be vigilant against misrepresenting their work.

Exhibitions that turn an ironic or self-critical eye on the viewing subject and the museological process of "othering" are most successful (Duncan 1998, 496). Art museum professionals must acknowledge the attribution of Western meanings and contexts to objects from non-Western cultures. Inherent in any one object are multiple and complex perspectives that include, but are not limited to, national patrimony, personal and cultural histories, religious beliefs, the history of collecting, and particular artistic influences (Vogel 1991, 201).

All inclusionary strategies necessarily pose complex challenges to conventional Eurocentric parameters for curatorial and institutional practices. Art galleries must engage in a self-critical process that recognizes the historical reasons for the under-representation, misrepresentation, and exclusion of Aboriginal art. This exercise involves considerable reflection upon the privileged status of European and Euro-Canadian art that defines current canons of Canadian art and, at the same time, renders Aboriginal art as a different "other." We must recognize the implications of these signifiers of difference as they affect the representation of diverse Aboriginal art histories and contemporary art practices. We must also acknowledge the legacy of European authorship as the context of the contemporary gallery. Once we have addressed these issues of context and definition, we can work together to identify appropriate models for Aboriginal representation in art galleries.

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Complex Sightings

Aboriginal Art and Intercultural Spectatorship

Andrea Naomi Walsh

The pleasure of looking that is derived from spectatorship is the starting point for critical analysis of art by writers, and it is vital to the production of art by artists. To narrate this visual experience, spectators often use terms such as *perspective* or *point of view*. These terms explicate subjective and objective positions within ontological discussions about art, artists, and their audiences. Spectatorship is a combination of the physical capability of human sight and the cultural understanding of that visual experience. Performances of spectatorship take place within the structures of modern scopic regimes (Jay 1987). Scopic regimes are manifest through social power structures that restrict or enhance physical and cultural processes of sight, and which operate in spaces of difference. These power structures manipulate and control "how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen therein" in everyday contexts. The performances of spectatorship include elements of both vision and visuality. Yet, within modern scopic regimes, vision is not opposed to visuality "as nature to culture." "[V]ision is social and historical" notes Foster, "and visuality involves the body and psyche" (Foster 1987, ix).

In artworlds, these dynamics determine a visual politic that exists between the arenas of production and reception of art. This visual politic is also at play in visual exchanges between artists and their audiences or spectators. In the specific case of Aboriginal art, the politic that originates out of the pleasure of looking is inextricably bound to the complicity of art, representation, and racial identity made manifest in performances of vision and visuality.

Thus, the role that spectatorship plays in the analysis of contemporary art is complex. Written consideration or accounts about art amount to more than discursive or textual renditions of the visual images captured on the retina of the eye; they include social and historical experiences that are layered onto those visuals by the spectator. Rey Chow has recognized overlays of gender and racial identity in her work on ethnic spectatorship. She writes, "metaphors and apparatuses of seeing become overwhelmingly important ways of talking, simply because 'seeing' carries with it the connotation of a demarcation of ontological boundaries between 'self' and 'other,' whether racial, social or sexual" (Chow 1991, 3).

I want to examine how vision and visuality contribute to texts that connote art as process by way of its production and reception by artists and spectators. My discussion moves through the fields of contemporary art texts and the production of art by individual artists. I begin with a focus on several art texts that were created for Columbus quincentenary decelebration exhibitions in Canadian cultural institutions around 1992. In this portion of my discussion, I examine how different experiences of vision and visuality (as written about by Native and non-Native writers) contributed to the formation of highly contested representations of colonial history and Aboriginal identity in mainstream institutions. The latter portion of my discussion explores how two artists – Dana Claxton and Jeff Thomas – use vision and visuality as tools to create art about identity and place. The works by these two artists that I have chosen for analysis evoke narratives from the artists' lives in major urban centres. I argue that their art puts forward their point of view on contested contemporary and historical representations of Aboriginal peoples and their histories. As I move through these different fields of inquiry (institutional texts and individual artistic production), I employ a common line of questioning for discussion. How are Aboriginal artists and writers challenging and attempting to direct inter-cultural spectator vision and visuality? Do these strategies direct not only *how* spectators see art but also *what* they see in the art?

The narratives I cite, both from institutional texts and by individual artists, deconstruct modernist and colonial texts that are founded upon dialectics of "observer" and "observed" – dialectics that make strategic use of the "gaze" by the observer as a primary tool of spectatorship. Some scholars argue that Aboriginal artists and writers resist having themselves and their art perceived through such scopic regimes by *returning* that gaze (Hill 1997, McMaster 1996).

I argue through my analysis of particular works of art and texts that this concept of the returned gaze oversimplifies the visual politic of representation and identity between Aboriginal artists, their art, and their spectators. In effect, it perpetuates the dialectic of observer and observed. Instead, I distinguish traces of alternative visual strategies that I identify as *active vision*. Active vision can incorporate multiple ways of seeing, such as gazing or glancing. It takes place as part of predicaments and/or performances that involve producers and consumers of visual culture who challenge the dialectic of "seer" and "seen."

I now turn to my first discussion on the relation between spectatorship and revisionist strategies employed by artists and writers who participated in decelebration exhibitions around the quincentenary of the arrival of Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) in the Americas. I am particularly interested in how these texts evoke differential vision and visuality as performed by artists and spectators and how these differences contributed to discussions about contested representations of colonial history and Aboriginal identity in art.

The story about the nautical error made by Columbus in 1492 and the ensuing legacy of colonialism is well known. For many Aboriginal people, the year 1492 marks the beginning of generations of oppression and displacement, but many non-tribal peoples in countries such as the United States continue to celebrate Columbus's inauguration of "the age of discovery" on October 10. The year 1992 marked the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Columbus and his ships. It is an understatement to say that the public reaction to such celebrations was mixed. The Indigenous peoples from Canada and the United States who protested against the quincentenary did so under a common banner of "500 Years of Resistance."

In Canada the impetus and direction for sentiments of protest and decelebration around the Columbus quincentenary came largely from Native community groups and smaller private organizations. There was little public recognition of the quincentenary by municipal or provincial governments, and public celebrations of this anniversary were conspicuous by their absence from the agenda of the federal government. Or were they?[1]

In 1992 two of Canada's principal cultural institutions – the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Civilization – mounted exhibitions of art created exclusively by Native artists. Both shows were impressive in their size, the number of artists involved, and the extensive budgets for media (catalogue text and documentation) contributed by the hosting institutions. The National Gallery exhibition "Land, Spirit, Power" was curated by Diana Nemiroff (curator, National Gallery of Canada), Robert Houle (Saulteaux artist, curator, educator), and Charlotte Townsend-Gault (independent curator and writer). The Canadian Museum of Civilization exhibition "Indigena" was curated by Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree curator and artist) and Lee-Ann Martin (Mohawk curator).

Some spectators saw the Canadian government sponsorship of these two exhibitions as the beginning of a public awareness concerning historical and contemporary predicaments of Aboriginal peoples. These exhibitions of contemporary art by Aboriginal artists were intended to expose the public to Aboriginal perspectives of colonial history that differed from mainstream narratives. However, there were also voices that opposed this hopeful scheme and accused the sponsoring institutions of tokenism.[2]

In addition to "Land, Spirit, Power" and "Indigena," I will discuss three other decelebration exhibitions that featured contemporary work by Aboriginal artists: "New Territories 350/500 Years After" (various locations in Montréal and Quebec City); "Revisions" (Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Alberta); and "The Columbus Boat" (solo exhibition by Carl Beam, Power Plant, Toronto). All three exhibitions were held in smaller public art galleries that receive government funding or support.

In 1990, two years prior to the decelebration exhibitions of 1992, the event known as the Oka crisis took place. The conflict between Kanien'kehaka warriors and the Quebec Provincial Police started with a dispute over land that was seen as sacred by the First Nations people and viewed as a potential site of a golf course by the town of Oka. This event, more than any other in recent times, heightened Canadian awareness of the colliding perspectives and viewpoints of land ownership and re-presentations of human history of First Nations peoples and non-Natives. In 1992, when the decelebration exhibitions presented First Nations art that focused on identity, land, and history, the events of the Oka crisis were still fresh in the minds not only of many of Aboriginal artists, but also of the Canadian scholars, curators, and critics who were involved with the exhibitions.

Part of the public reception and consumption of the 1992 exhibitions is recorded in essays, reviews, and monographs written by those scholars, curators and critics. Some of these texts are publications produced by the cultural institutions that sponsored the exhibitions; others are articles published in Canadian art journals and magazines.[3] I use this written documentation in an archival manner so that my reading of the text will permit me to understand how others see art.

Until recently, the reception of art (manifest in critical analysis) by artworld spectators relied upon scopic regimes that attempted to establish the authenticity or legitimacy of art by categorizing objects according to an interpretation of meaning, purpose, and quality. In this earlier period of art analysis, questions of authenticity revolved around Aboriginal art as a product or object. In contrast, reception of the 1992 exhibitions was centered on issues of the legitimacy (read: authenticity) of historical narratives of *European* discovery. In other words, there has been a reversal of attention that shifted the question of authenticity from the Aboriginally-produced object to Euro-North American spectatorship and beliefs. A principal aim of the art and writing by Aboriginal artists and writers was the re-visioning of shared historical records.

The racial and political contexts of the 1992 exhibitions created arenas of multicultural observation in contested spaces. Spectator vision operated both in the physical exhibition spaces and in the intellectual spaces occupied by written art texts. These tangible and intangible cultural venues became highly politicized arenas of representation of history and identity.

The written texts by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal spectators indicate that the overriding concern in their reception of the art on exhibition were the politics of *viewing* Aboriginal people and art. Questions that emerge out of artist and spectator narratives concern the direction of intention and interpretation of individual performances of spectatorship (who looks at whom, and how). The viewing dynamic presented through the texts gave me the impression that at any one time, a viewing subject could be the observer, or she could be under observation herself. In spite of the possibility of co-evalness in this visual dynamic, texts written by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal spectators question whether the two groups have ever experienced a shared sense of time and space.

In their introduction to "Indigena," Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin differentiate between "Western time," which is associated with 1492, the date of Columbus's arrival, and "Indigenous time," which "will mark this year as any other since time immemorial." Furthermore, they argue that there has been "a five hundred year parallel history, Native and non-Native" (McMaster and Martin 1992, 11). Charlotte Townsend-Gault also questions the historical and contemporary interpretations of time and space in her essay for the exhibition "Land, Spirit, Power." She writes: "These artists are making interventions into some of the most daunting ethical and epistemological issues of our shared time and space, including whether our ideas of that time and space are in fact commensurate and therefore can be shared" (Townsend-Gault 1992, 82).

McMaster, Martin, and Townsend-Gault suggest that there cannot be a uniform understanding of history – we all see things differently. The exhibition texts of 1992 passed over discussions of self-contained notions of identity and particular understandings of history, and went on to question the power dynamics that determine the visualization and remembrance of history. Because Native and non-Native peoples have experienced time and space differently, the two groups have committed to memory different historical narratives: processes of colonialism have made non-Native narratives of North American human history dominant. The purpose of the decelebration exhibitions was to counter this dominant perspective and its renditions of history. However, in spite of this mutual revisionist agenda, spectator texts displayed different counter-hegemonic strategies and performances of vision and visuality.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal writers often repeated McMaster and Martin's claim that representation of Native narratives of history have too often been silenced, and appropriated by non-Native "experts" in anthropology, art history, and by political personalities. Alongside this shared criticism, however, were strategies written exclusively by Aboriginal writers that aimed at shifting the power of the visual politic in favour of purely Aboriginal perspectives of history and identity.

In their essays for the *Indigena* catalogue, Alfred Young Man and Loretta Todd state that before any kind of meaningful visual exchange can take place between Native and non-Native peoples, the dominant perspective must be dismantled and room be made for Aboriginal perspectives. I believe that Young Man's writing demonstrates some of the principles of active vision I outlined at the beginning of this essay. He advises spectators of Aboriginal art to "learn something about the arguments that rage around [the art]." To understand the arguments that artists are making, viewers must "become familiar with the North American *Native Perspective*" (Young Man 1992, 81). He further explains:

> *The native perspective requires that the dominant point of view – the Western parochial, provincial, linear perspective – be rethought from the viewpoints of how North American Indians perceive important questions of their culture, history, politics, religion, language, music, art and so forth.*
>
> **Young Man (1992, 195 n 1)**

Loretta Todd questions the power relationship that exists between Aboriginal art producers and their non-Aboriginal audience and critics when the language and perspectives of the dominant society are used to analyze Aboriginal art (Todd 1992, 73). As an example, she cites the imposition of modernist ideas of "exclusion and hierarchy" as well as "reason and rationality" on Aboriginal art discourses. Todd asks: "What of our own theories of art, our own philosophies of life, our own purposes for representation?" (Todd 1992, 75).

Young Man and Todd ask spectators of Aboriginal art to recognize the subjective intent of Aboriginal artworld participants. How do Aboriginal artists critically view their own cultures? What do artists see from their point of view that becomes important to their artmaking? Through their texts, Young Man and Todd suggest methods to control the power of vision by means of Aboriginally-predetermined positions for viewing subjects. In the case of the subject who cannot view from the Aboriginal perspective, their strategy still determines *how* spectators see Aboriginal art. By controlling the operational conditions of spectatorship, Young Man and Todd also wield the power to determine *what* the spectator sees; they do not deflect the focus of spectatorship away from Aboriginal artists and their art. Rather, they control the power of vision for their purpose of re-telling histories and creating contemporary narratives from Aboriginal perspectives.

Non-Native curators recognized this struggle over perspectives and points of view by responding to Aboriginal critics of historical representation and art in two principle ways. The first was to repeat or explain the strategies undertaken by Aboriginal people to shift the balance of power in these scopic arenas. Ruth B. Phillips and Marion Jackson took this approach in their text for *New Territories* 350/500 *Years After*. They write that Aboriginal peoples are "reclaiming control over the processes of their own representation." Phillips and Jackson identify this struggle as taking place through sites of cultural production such as "textbooks, museum displays, journalism, and television sitcoms," and substantiate this view with a quote from George Erasmus in which he argues for the need to "'rewrite history' from a native point of view" as part of his statement to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Issues (Phillips and Jackson 1992, 38).

The other way in which non-Native curators deal with the very immediate questions about representing native art is to focus on *how* the art of the exhibitions represents "new ways of looking" (Pakasaar 1992, 5) and "re-visioning" (Rhodes 1992, 42). In her analysis of video work by Mike MacDonald and Zacharias Kunuk for the *Revisions* catalogue, Helga Pakasaar attempted to reveal alternative visual tactics by the artists. For example, she states that the work by these artists is "initially reminiscent of ethnographic documentary," but that "through different camera perspectives, editing techniques, and an emphasis on what is normally considered irrelevant detail, they override these conventions" (Pakasaar 1992, 42).

The history of the genre of ethnographic documentary is located squarely in the middle of the anthropological scopic paradigm that Aboriginal critics are themselves questioning. Pakasaar's suggestion that the camera techniques of these two specific Aboriginal artists give a more significant (as opposed to irrelevant) picture of their cultures begs the question, what then is legitimate? Or as Charlotte Townsend-Gault asks, "To what extent [does] 'meaning' depend on cultural difference?" (Townsend-Gault 1992, 80). The relation between legitimacy and visibility becomes a fundamental part of the politic of seeing and representing Native art.

Questions about signification and recognition (visual and otherwise) of cultural difference can be answered by means of scales of perceived legitimacy. Legitimate signs of Aboriginal culture for non-Aboriginal people have been recognized as such because they are "legible and repeatable" to that group of people (Fisher 1992, 39). Though not interchangeable, legibility and visibility are both connected to the act of recognition, which is what I am principally concerned with here. Visually recognized signs of Aboriginality are, according to Jean Fisher, "devoid of the proximity of incomprehensible and unpleasurable content and re-marked with the pleasurable distance of history and exoticism" (Fisher 1992, 39). The stereotype of the noble savage existing within the landscape as part of the ethnographic present and contemporary stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples have been cited by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal spectators as fundamental markers of the viewing pleasure of Aboriginal art by non-Aboriginal peoples.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal critics, however, have demonstrated a desire to disrupt any apparatus that creates viewing pleasure for particular groups, and to restrict self-controlled production of identity for others. The insertion into public spaces such as art galleries of signs other than those that are readily visible to mainstream society spectators (that is, signs that provide viewing pleasure for that group) can be disruptive to dominant scopic regimes. The use of this visual strategy in mainstream institutions in the 1992 exhibitions created spaces that recognized Aboriginal perspectives of colonial history. The recognition of visual heteroglossia and the multiple visual strategies at play in the arenas of galleries, texts, and images by spectators provide departure points for discussion concerning not only what spectators see, but also how they see it, and furthermore, how these processes *change* the way they see.

In his catalogue essay, Richard Rhodes, the curator of Carl Beam's solo show "The Columbus Boat," explores the meanings of Beam's continual juxtaposition of seemingly disparate signs. In Beam's painting *Cyclical Temporal Adjustment*, Rhodes notes the juxtaposition of a "softened" portrait of Columbus with a dominating image of Christ's crucifixion by Mantegna. He writes, "we see the image as an image of the spiritual world that Columbus brought to America. We then begin to reflect on the European 'discovery' not as a discovery but as an immigration, a transplantation of attitudes and expectations" (Rhodes 1992, 44). "As a whole, *Temporal Cyclical Adjustment* [*sic*] seems to take a position against the validity of its images. They come to us as manipulations, nightmares and mistakes, greyed-down like ghosts under streams of white bleach that turn the entire surface of the painting into a metaphoric veil of tears" (Rhodes 1992, 45). This interpretation indicates that Rhodes' view of the painting does not maintain the distance, nor does it involve the exoticism that Jean Fisher identified as markers of non-Aboriginal viewing pleasure. If anything, Rhodes expresses discomfort or displeasure from his gaze. This contradiction suggests that the significance of Beam's painting lies in not only the artist's intent, or the curator's interpretation, but also in its role as the catalyst of active vision.

Of what relevance are the images of Christ and Columbus in this work? Why does Beam use these symbols of oppression? How does his use of these symbols of Christianity and colonialism disempower the visual politic with which they are conventionally associated?

In her argument for an ethnic spectatorship, Rey Chow incorporates Teresa de Lauretis's description of "illusion" as "falsehood" in feminist film analysis (Chow 1991, 22). De Lauretis writes that a "radical film practice can only constitute itself against the specification of that cinema, in counterpoint to it, and must set out to destroy the 'satisfaction, pleasure and privilege' it affords" (de Lauretis, quoted in Chow 1991, 21).

Carl Beam uses visual strategies similar to those recognized by authors such as Chow who are concerned with film theory. Beam recognizes the benefits of "satisfaction, pleasure and privilege" that the images of Christ and colonialism have given to the dominant body of spectators in Canada at the cost of Aboriginal people. From the Native perspective, these benefits are only possible because of an "illusory" or "false" historical narrative of Christianity and colonialism; it is logical that Beam would want to destroy this visual pleasure based upon "illusion." Nevertheless, this still does not explain why Beam uses these particular images to make the Native perspective known. Why not respond to these images with visually powerful Aboriginal images?

To understand Beam's use of these symbols, it is useful to consider Chow's suggestion that "'illusion' may be mobilized or generalized for a *departure* from that framework" (Chow 1991, 21). In the case of the Beam painting, the frameworks are Christianity and colonialism. In her discussion, Chow revisits Althusser's formulation of ideology as "the *reproduction* of the conditions of production" (Althusser, quoted in Chow 1991, 22). She interprets Althusser's use of the term "existing relations" of production as the "mental attitudes, wishes, sufferings, and fantasies of the individuals involved in the processes of active production" (Chow 1991, 22). Chow concludes that these ideological performances indicate that any reception of culture has a responsive, performative aspect (Chow 1991, 22).

Chow quotes de Lauretis as stating that the articulation of "relations of the female subject to representation, meaning, and vision … is to construct the terms of another frame of reference, another measure of desire" (de Lauretis, quoted in Chow 1991, 23). I would argue that the intent of the collective project of the decelebration exhibitions of 1992 – to recognize Aboriginal perspectives of history as another "frame of reference" – is analogous to de Lauretis's argument concerning feminist film practice. The relation between representation, meaning, and vision is fundamental to the creation of meaning within Beam's painting, *Cyclical Temporal Adjustment*.

According to de Lauretis, the recognition of another frame of reference "cannot be done by destroying all representational coherence, by denying 'the hold' of the image in order to prevent identification and subject reflection, by voiding the perception of any given or preconstructed meanings" (de Lauretis, quoted in Chow 1991, 23). Richard Rhodes alludes to this predicament in his analysis of *Cyclical Temporal Adjustment* when he says that Beam is able "to reclaim the subject in spite of the image" (Rhodes 1992, 41).

Beam's subject is the intersection of Christianity and colonialism as part of an illusory and false representation of history as experienced (received) by Aboriginal peoples. By his choice of imagery, Beam maintains "representational coherence" for many of his spectators who subscribe to the dominant narratives of history represented by the images of Christ and Columbus. However, Beam interrupts the visibility (read: legibility) of these signs for the purpose of re-telling history or presenting another framework – namely, his Native perspective. Beam effectively denies mainstream viewing pleasure. Rhodes' description of the drips of white bleach that cover the images of Christ and Columbus as "a metaphoric veil of tears" symbolizes the "mental attitudes, wishes, sufferings, and fantasies" performed by Aboriginal peoples in their reception of Western culture. The intersecting points of production and reception between Carl Beam and Richard Rhodes reveal multiple ways in which spectatorships become sites of productive relations.

I now turn my attention toward two artists that I interviewed: filmmaker Dana Claxton and photographer Jeff Thomas. I begin my discussion about these two artists and their art by recounting parts of my interviews with them. Then I use these texts to discuss the visual strategies that I see Claxton and Thomas using in their work and my response as a spectator to these strategies. In this analysis, I continue my line of questioning concerning *how* Aboriginal artists attempt to direct the spectatorship of their viewers, and whether or not this affects *what* the viewer sees in art.

During the summer of 1998, I worked as a researcher at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. There, at an art opening, I met Jeff Thomas, an Onondaga photographer living and working in Ottawa. I had seen Thomas's photographs before we met. As a Canadian with some family history of Native/European marriages, and as a visual anthropologist, I was intrigued by his use of signs that I associate with the combined histories of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Moreover, his photographed images, more than any others I know, embody what has been called "the return of the gaze." However, I believe that the visual politic at play in Thomas's production of the image and my reception of it is much more complex and interesting than a simple exchange of looks. Inherent in such visual exchanges are processes of production and consumption – by both artists and spectators – of visual signs in art and the experiences of pleasure and displeasure that these agents associate with such activities. In my interview with Thomas, I wanted to explore how he made the relations he felt between sense of place and his identity visual through photography. I was interested in how he envisioned his surroundings as both content and context for his photographs, and whether his visuality became part of a visual strategy to direct the spectatorship of his images.

Ottawa, 7 August 1998[4]

Jeff Thomas and I sat at the dining room table in his minimalist furnished space in downtown Ottawa. Black and white photographic images of diverse subject matter covered the walls of his apartment. We began our conversation by talking about the role of place in his work. Almost immediately Thomas mentioned how important the cities of Ottawa, Winnipeg, London (Ontario), and Buffalo (New York) were to his work and his development as an artist.

"How have the places in which you have lived changed, and how have they changed you?" I asked. He told me that his motivation to move to the city of Winnipeg was to learn more about the Pow Wow, because the focus of his photography at the time was Pow Wow dancers. However, it was the story he told me of how he started to take photographs in Buffalo, N.Y. that I found particularly interesting.

> *When I was living in Buffalo, I started photographing what I saw on the street. I was like a street photographer wandering around looking for interesting things, juxtapositions, old buildings, and signage. So I was working in the long tradition of photographers such as Atget in Paris. I like the idea of the calm landscape. So that is what I was looking for, it was not a peopled landscape. It was streets, it was the built environment, and it was without people.*

As we talked and Thomas spread more and more photographs out on the dining room table, he spoke of his interest in "playing around with reading signs, kind of a semiotics." One particular photograph – a painted Thunderbird on a wall – portrayed this kind of play in his work.

> *I photographed it [the Thunderbird] in such a way that you are also looking down Main street and moving along the street, thinking about what is above that – the sky – Thunderbird – where does it come from? I was thinking about fasting and vision quests and how you transform that idea of the vision*

> *quest and using urban symbols. So this is the product of those thoughts. My work is very much like that of an archaeologist. I go around and photograph things that I think are interesting without any conclusive ideas of how they fit together ... I am not re-constructing. I am constructing.*

Narratives constructed through visual experience, like that of the Thunderbird image described by Thomas above, come from what he calls "memory landscape." Simply, the concept evokes "the idea of the landscape and the memories that it holds for us and how we then deal with that." In view of Thomas's comment, I understand memory landscapes to incorporate differing temporal and geographical frameworks and places; they are about juxtaposition, construction, and practiced spaces and places (Certeau 1984).

Two historically famous photographers have inspired Jeff Thomas: Edward Sheriff Curtis (1868–1952) and Eugene Atget (1856–1927). Curtis photographed thousands of Native Americans during the early twentieth-century in his quest to document that he believed were a vanishing race of people. Atget devoted his career to documenting the disappearing Parisian landscape of the nineteenth century, particularly public monuments. The desire of these two photographers to document people and objects in specific spaces and places (both temporal and geographic), which they believed would soon exist only in memory, resonates with Jeff Thomas in his own work.

The photographs Thomas claims as part of his memory landscape become visual devices that place the artist in historical moments of his own making. "The panorama of urban places becomes my property, so to speak," said Thomas. The memory landscape is a combination of tangible and intangible references. "The narratives for the images, they only exist in my mind." Yet, when experienced together with the photographs that represent the memory landscape, the result is a "survival manual in a particular sense."

The narratives that Thomas recited as we viewed his work provided me with much insight concerning his motivation for taking photographs, and his choice of imagery. Here he recounts the event during which his idea of a memory landscape emerged.

> *My grandparents moved to Buffalo from the reserve, which is why I call myself a first-generation urban Indian. They moved to the city looking for work. On my father's side of the family, my grandfather spoke only broken English. He was raised in a traditional way as a traditional longhouse person. So he came to the city and went through a lot of culture shock. But my grandmother was also a Mohawk, who came from the upper end, so she was*

> *well to do and educated. My grandfather died a week before I was born, and the story goes that he was trying to live long enough until I was born. But he didn't make it. He did not make that connection. So I grew up with the ideal image of my grandfather, my family did not talk about him that much. When I started taking photographs downtown, I use to think he very well could have been in this part of the city, because I'd look around and see a lot of old Indian guys on the street, etc. So I walked around thinking what it would be like to bump into him, to know maybe he wasn't really dead.*

After our interview at his residence, Thomas and I walked through the emptying streets of Ottawa's downtown core in search of a restaurant for dinner. As we walked and chatted, I thought about his idea of the memory landscape. How did I see the city of Ottawa? I thought about what I could physically see, and my experience of the city while I lived there during my short-term research contract. I asked myself if I experienced what Thomas described as a memory landscape as I walked along the historically significant streets of Ottawa. I concluded I that I could not.

Vancouver, 3 March 1998[5]

I began my interview with Dana Claxton sitting amid the rooftop gardens of the warehouse building that she calls her studio and home in Vancouver, British Columbia. The panoramic view that stretched out before me was overwhelming. The downtown core of the city of Vancouver that formed a portion of the vista embodied my ideas of a postmodern city, with the Sky Train rails running like veins through a body of brick, wood, glass, and steel. Beyond this urban landscape lay the surrounding North Shore Mountains – jagged, dark, grey and blue ribbons of colour, topped with white snowcaps. I grew up on the West Coast and this landscape is familiar, but its majesty never ceases to amaze me. With this visual backdrop to our conversation on art, I asked Dana Claxton, a Lakota filmmaker and performance artist originally from Saskatchewan, about her life in this environment.

Her initial response was not about the magnificent landscape stretched out before us. Instead, she spoke about how her "genetic memory" sets in when she visits certain wide-open natural landscapes in South Dakota and Saskatchewan where she grew up, and where her maternal relatives still reside Her feeling of familiarity with the landscape "from a long time ago," has been effective throughout her art. Claxton then spoke of the three years she spent in New York as an artist. It was during this time, she believes, that her consciousness of the connections between people and place was elevated. While in New York she began to take note of city buildings that had architectural detail depicting Indigenous peoples in historical periods. Re-occurring questions for Claxton became: "Where are the Indian people who lived here?" and "Where are they represented historically besides in the Smithsonian and on buildings?" "You would never know," she said, "that at one point, that was all an Indian community there ... whenever I go travelling anywhere I think, 'Who's place is this?'"

When I asked Claxton to continue talking about her thoughts on urban landscapes, she switched her focus to the view before us. She said that like New York, Vancouver has a lot of architecture that depicts Indigenous peoples. "I just found some at the Vancouver Hotel," she said enthusiastically. We talked more about Aboriginal representation in the city, and I asked how she experiences the city as an artist. Her response to this question was to talk about the "spirit of the land" and the "spirit of her ancestors" as having continual presence in the city, albeit in their "invisibleness." Claxton likened this visual condition of her ancestors to the people she sees everyday who occupy the skid row area just blocks from her warehouse. These people, she said, "inform my work, fuel my work." The occupants of this depressed area of the city are an extremely visible population, but simultaneously they are "totally invisible" to urban dwellers who have no concern for social issues.

At the end of the interview, Claxton gave me a copy of her video, *I Want To Know Why*. As I watched the video I became aware of visual traces of the ideas she had spoken about earlier that day in our conversation. The black and white video moves in a staccato-like manner through images of New York, Victoria, Hold the Kettle Indian Reserve (Saskatchewan) and Ottawa. In the urban spaces Claxton has filmed various pieces of architecture and monuments that depict Aboriginal people: details from the New York Police precinct, the Manhattan Savings Bank, the parliament buildings of Victoria and Ottawa, and the mammoth wooden monument at Indian Head. Images of a teepee are juxtaposed with images of these urban structures. Also shown in the video is an image of Claxton's great grandmother, Mestijela. Starting slowly, softly and then repeatedly with increasing volume Claxton's voice is heard alongside all these images saying: "Eli Goodtrack, my mother, OD'd at the age of 37... Pearl Goodtrack, my grandmother, died of alcohol poisoning in a skid row hotel room ... Mistijela, my great grandmother, walked to Canada with Sitting Bull STARVING AND I WANT TO KNOW WHY!" The video ends with alternating images of Claxton's great grandmother's face and the face of the Statue of Liberty (fig. 32).

After our conversation that sunny March afternoon, I walked to the Vancouver bus and train terminal, which is about five city blocks from Claxton's studio. As I walked north on Main Street, the city structures eclipsed the majestic view of the mountains, and the sun shone only through small spaces between the buildings. The central bus terminal is located at the edge of the skid row area to which Claxton had referred.

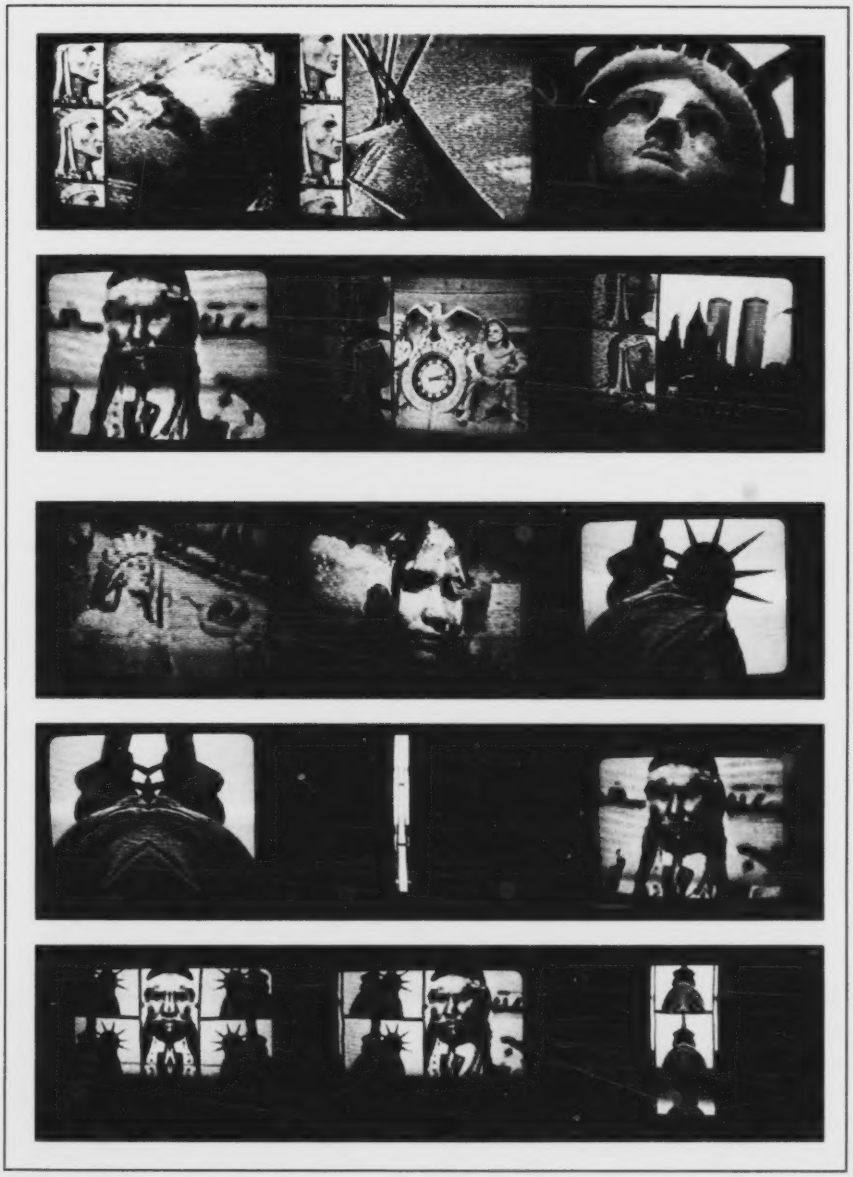


Figure 32

Dana Claxton, *I Want to Know Why*, 1994. Hi-8 colour video with sound, 6:20 min. Vancouver: Video Out. Claxton's juxtaposes various signifiers of Aboriginal identity and urban development using split-screen imagery to suggest a complex fragmentation of the meta-narratives of colonialism, race, and gender. Video stills with artist's permission.

As I approached the terminal, I passed by people that Claxton had described as visible yet invisible. Some were sitting in the park across from the terminal; others were on their way to and from the bars in the area; still others were, like me, walking quickly with "purpose" through this space toward the terminal.

All spectators experience vision through gendered and ethnic lenses (Chow 1991, Mulvey 1988, de Lauretis 1984). Every performance of spectatorship is dynamic, and visual exchanges between viewing agents perpetually challenge, dismantle, and re-construct identity. The relation between vision and identity, and between seeing and self-fashioning, in Claxton's and Thomas's art does not make their work markedly different from the work of non-Native artists who are also interested in these relationships. Their art becomes particular because of the visual politics around spectatorship that Claxton and Thomas create by integrating content and style with vision and experience of Aboriginal identity. The foundations of these politics of spectatorship lie in the shared colonial and post-colonial histories of Native and non-Native peoples that have far reaching political, economic, and social implications for the present. Both artists referred to historical memory as it relates to the displacement of Aboriginal peoples and the legacy of colonialism for nations and individual families. Claxton asked where the Aboriginal people are who historically lived on land that is now New York, and she referred to her own genetic memory. Thomas contemplated his grandfather's life as an urban Aboriginal person in the city of Buffalo (re-created in his images of memory landscape). Narratives of colonial histories and the images used to re-circulate these narratives and bring a line to bear on their contemporary relevance are present in the work of both artists. In Claxton's video documentation of the experiences and plight of the Aboriginal women in her own family, she combines images of modern cities, reserves, and family. Thomas's memory landscape photographs crosscut real and imagined spaces and places of his family history; the lack of family imagery in his photographs becomes a metaphor of loss.

Claxton and Thomas use different visual strategies for engaging spectators in an alternative dialogic of active vision. Hence, my analysis for each artist's work has a different focus. My interpretation of Claxton's video *I Want to Know Why* stems from my argument that she engages a particular visual politic through the style in which she presents her images. My analysis of Thomas's work considers the visual politic associated with the content of the imagery in his photographs.

Claxton refers to her own spectatorship or processes of looking in her successful search in urban Vancouver for architectural representations of Aboriginal peoples. This activity reveals an agency of *intent* (she is the initiator of spectatorship) rather than *reaction* (read: returning another's gaze). In several ways, the visual strategies used by Claxton to produce her art imply a mobility that I associate with the act of *glancing*. Glancing is understood opposed to *gazing*, which I interpret as a stationary activity.[6]

In my conversation with Claxton, it became evident that her sense of vision and visuality contained multiple points of reference, which she accessed through integrated performances of glancing and gazing. She spoke about the tangible and visible geography of the Plains and of New York architecture, as well as the intangible and invisible aspects of people, spaces, and places of skid row. These shifting points of view in her narrative provide evidence for the self-conscious manner in which Claxton, as a viewing body/subject, moves through these spaces.

How, then, does Claxton use this mobility and the acts of vision, which I have identified as glancing, in her art as a visual strategy to direct the spectatorship of her viewers? To answer this question, I will refer to my own viewing experience of Claxton's art. When I watched her video *I Want to Know Why*, the staccato-like images (emphasized by her use of computer-aided audio) never allowed me, as a spectator, to stop and gaze; my attempts at gazing were always sabotaged by her editing techniques. I did not, however, feel that this prohibition prevented me from understanding the point of the video. Over the course of the video, I was able to read many of Claxton's images into a meaningful sequence. In the rapidly changing images, I saw signifiers of Native identity (teepees, face paint on a dancer, traces of traditional Plains singing in the audio track) as well as urban monuments and cityscapes (that I also associate with Native identity). Claxton's juxtaposition of these diverse images evoked a sense of movement or travel between physical places and cultural realities (historical dwelling in teepees and modern living in cities).

According to Norman Bryson, the act of glancing does not necessarily impede what subjects see; rather the act changes *how they see* it. He writes that subjects "gradually build up a conceptual version of the compositional structures," which, Bryson says, "are not disclosed during the actual time of the glance, but exist on either side, before the glance and after it" (Bryson 1983, 121). Certainly, the rapid and juxtaposed manner in which Claxton presents her images forced me to follow, or attempt to keep up with, the images. I contrast this experience to a privileged viewpoint where I could dwell on the images and create my own narrative. Claxton's style of delivery took from me the pleasure of determining how I saw particular images and in so doing, imposed her point of view and directed my spectatorship.

Claxton's juxtaposition of signifiers of Aboriginal identity and urban development played a crucial role in pulling me, as a viewer, into her narrative. My intrigue with her video was peaked not by the presence of specific images, but rather by the gaps between legible signs of Indianness and the signs of mass culture that I encountered with each change of image. Claxton's strategy of fragmenting the screen to produce

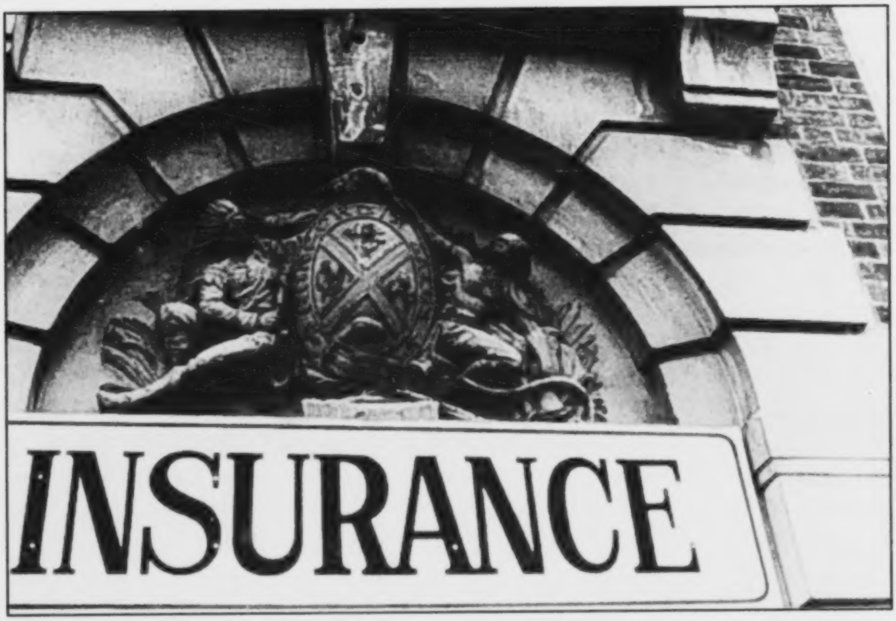
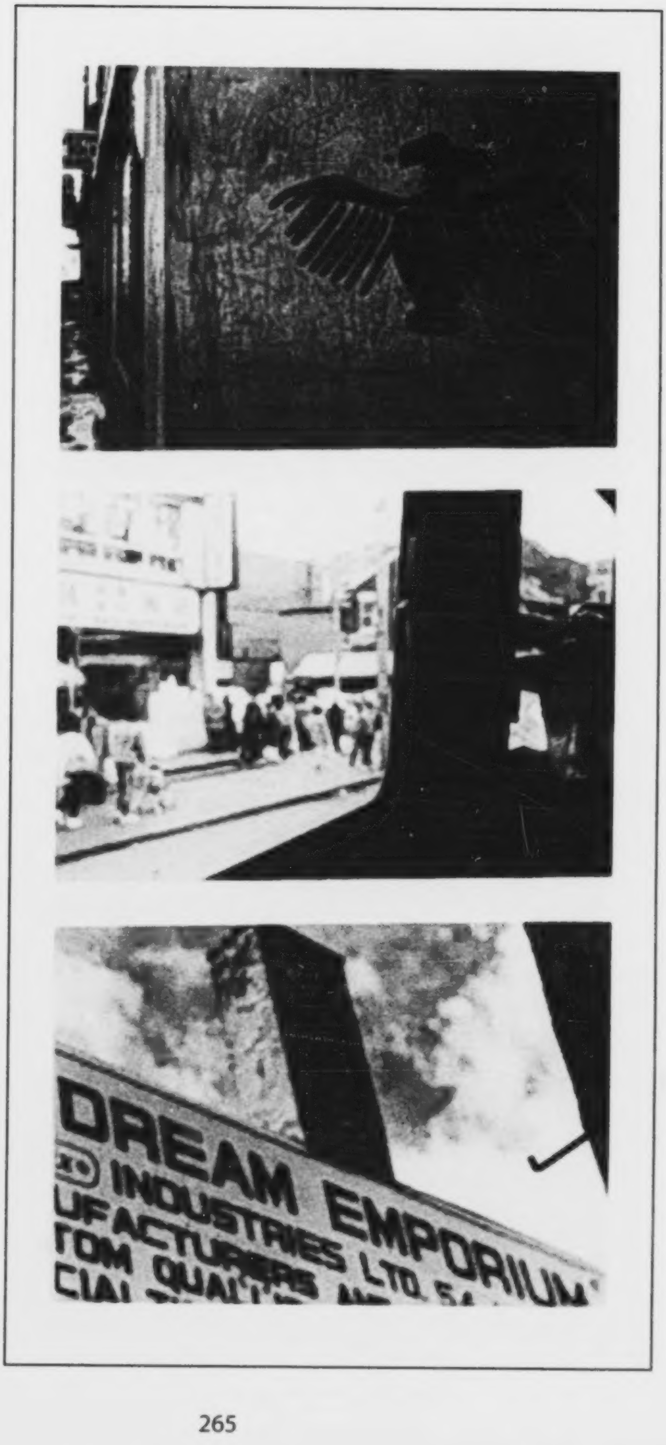


Figure 33
Jeff Thomas, *INSURANCE*, 1997. Silver Gelatin print. 22.9 x 33 cm. Collection of the artist. In this photograph, Thomas emphasizes the irony of the meaning of the word "insurance." The photograph depicts a contemporary insurance company's use of a historical coat of arms detailing an Aboriginal person and a European person embracing the same shield as if they shared its historical and ideological significance. Photograph: Jeff Thomas.

split and mirrored images creates a deeper level of narrative than one simply based upon viewer identification of signifier/signified images. I argue that Claxton's division of the screen into micro-images connotes a similar fragmentation of the meta-narratives of colonialism, race, and gender to which her images refer.

Thomas's treatment of memory landscape represents his ambivalence toward overtly directing the viewer to his point of view through the use of cultural signifiers. It is true that in images such as INSURANCE (fig. 33) and *Dream Emporium* (fig. 34), viewers may be able to "suture" (Silverman 1983, 193–236) together narratives by relating the written text in the photographs to the content of the images. For example, in order for Thomas to successfully direct the spectatorship of his audience to the visual politic he creates based on image content in *Dream Emporium*, the viewer must recognize the links that he constructs between literal and symbolic signs of urban excess (the dream *emporium*), a young boy staring out of a mass transit vehicle in an urban setting, and the iconographic depiction of an eagle. In INSURANCE, Thomas

Figure 34
Jeff Thomas, *Dream Emporium*, assembled 1986. Silver Gelatin print. 17.8 x 22.9 cm. Collection of the artist. Thomas asks his viewers to recognize the links that he constructs between literal and symbolic signs of urban excess (the dream emporium) with the imagery of a young boy staring out of a mass transit vehicle in an urban setting, and an iconographic depiction of an eagle. Photograph: Jeff Thomas.


DREAM EMPORIUM
INDUSTRIES LTD.
UFACTURERS
TOM QUAL

points to the irony created by the juxtaposition of a modern insurance company sign against the backdrop of a historical coat of arms that shows an Aboriginal person and a European person embracing the shield. Unless viewers of this work have a knowledge of historical relations in Canada between Native and non-Native peoples and the continued cynicism felt by many Native peoples toward Euro-North American institutions (of which insurance agencies are a part) this photograph will not change or provoke a difference in *how* they see the art and what they see *in* the art. Having said this, I do not believe that this is the point of Thomas's visual strategy for engaging his spectators. I return to his statement that his inspiration for taking images of memory landscape came from the French photographer Eugene Atget who photographed the disappearing landscape of Paris around the beginning of the twentieth century. All of Thomas's narratives about place and identity involve fusion of Native and non-Native histories and experiences of co-dwelling in urban locations. He described his own childhood in Buffalo and his adult life in large cities in detail. Therefore, I argue that an image such as *Kam Lee* LAUNDRY (fig. 35) is symbolic of urban Aboriginal identity. Yet, without the visual signifiers of Indianness that Claxton's work portrays, Thomas's photographs deny viewers the pleasure of recognition and consumption of an "Other" experience. On the surface, Claxton's images allow viewers to take pleasure in the consumption of visible difference. Thomas, however, denies that pleasure by offering images of sameness. My assumption in making this statement is that these images are viewed in urban galleries in cities like those that Thomas portrays as his memory landscape. Nevertheless, through his photographs, Thomas does offer viewers an opportunity to change *how* they see the content of his images. In this respect, I argue that the visual strategies at play in Thomas's work are much more subtle and complex than those at work in Claxton's video. Indeed, Thomas's art can change the way his viewers see in art, but his art also changes *what* they see if they can avoid frustration from the lack of immediately legible symbols of Indian identity. Thomas directs the spectatorship of his viewers by offering them views of shared urban environments. Finally, I believe that Thomas acknowledges his viewers' familiarity with the content of images. He knows his audience may easily dismiss the photographs if they are only allowed to view them through the brevity of a glance. Therefore, he allows viewers the luxury and privilege of using the strategy of gaze in their spectatorship and interpretation of his images by presenting the images one at a time in singular format. Because Thomas allows viewers to ultimately determine the temporal duration of the visual exchange, I see the spectatorship of his photographs as a mediated or shared conversation.

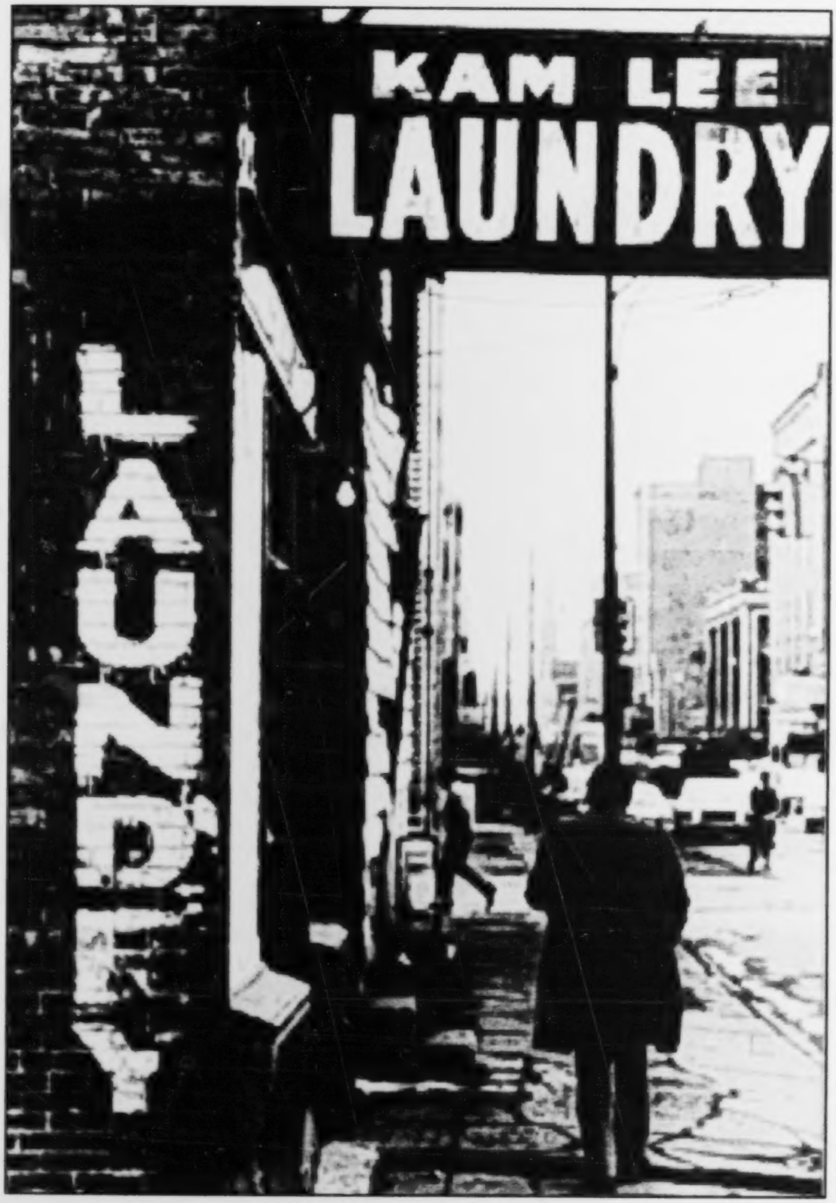


Figure 35
Jeff Thomas, *Kam Lee LAUNDRY*, 1981. Silver Gelatin print. 22.9 x 33 cm. Collection of the artist. Thomas creates a visual narrative of co-habitation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in urban centres through his documentation of places in which he has lived or stayed. Photograph: Jeff Thomas.

Conclusion

I have examined the production and reception of art as it is mediated through vision and visuality in two separate fields of text: institutional texts and individual pieces of art. In both cases, I analyzed the art as visual and textual *process*, rather than as a product. I approached the analysis in this manner in order to explore how artists and writers (Native and non-Native) acknowledge and accommodate varying perspectives and points of view that arise from different experiences of shared histories of place and identity (narratives of de-celebration in Columbus de-celebration exhibitions and contemporary lives in urban spaces). My reading and interpretation of the texts and art that I analyze in this paper moves away from a governing dialectic of observer/observed toward multiple visual strategies under the rubric of *active vision*. The process of reading or exchanging legible (read: legitimate) cultural signs through art is an important contributing factor to the level of satisfaction, or pleasure that viewers derive from spectatorship. The recognition of visual strategies such as those I have identified in a discussion about active vision demonstrates that visual exchanges between artists and their spectators are not "all or nothing" conversations or resistances – they are, as Gerald Vizenor observes, "mixed blood narrative forms" (Vizenor, quoted in Krupat 1992, 119).

Notes

1. In contrast to the lack of attention paid to the Columbus quincentenary in 1992, the Atlantic provinces (particularly Newfoundland) made much of the "Cabot 500" celebrations, involving major corporate sponsors such as Air Canada and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce as well as local and international music talent. Premier Brian Tobin announced that Newfoundland's "Festival 500" celebrations were a kickoff for a new era in Atlantic tourism.

2. Critic Scott Watson commended the two galleries on their exhibitions but he added that it was "too early for congratulations" (Watson 1993).

3. It was outside of the realm of my research at the time to gather data on other public forms of response (for example that of museum and gallery patrons who paid to see the exhibitions).

4. My interview with Jeff Thomas took place on 7 August 1998 at his residence in Ottawa, Ontario. All quotations of Jeff Thomas in the following paragraphs have been transcribed from that interview.

5. My interview with Dana Claxton took place on 3 March 1998 at her residence in Vancouver, British Columbia. All quotations of Dana Claxton in the following paragraph have been transcribed from that interview.

6. Martin Jay has written that historical development of critical thinking about agency and vision begins with late Renaissance Cartesian perspectivalism (Jay 1987, 1993). Cartesian perspectivalism came to represent the reigning mode of vision as it combined the "natural" experience of sight or God's will with substantiating scientific evidence (Jay and Brennan

1996, 67). The investigation into the *viewing* eye epitomized the increasing knowledge of and experimentation with vision and sight. The disembodied eye was unquestionably singular (rather than binocular), immobile, and fixed in a stare, rather than operating as a dynamic glance. The comprehension of sight in this manner provided a basis for a study of vision that is focused upon the static gaze of the viewer.

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After Essay – And Also ...

Richard William Hill

Early in the contemporary session at the Art Gallery Ontario, curator Gerald McMaster suggested that our discussion could move from the consideration of problems of achieving institutional representation to concrete questions of how to present art. This is the territory we all yearn to inhabit – the beckoning future where our new notions of self and community will be negotiated, the critical space where we'll think our way out of the traps that constrain us. As it turned out, this necessarily optimistic wish remained somewhat unfulfilled, as the conversation snaked back repeatedly (and perhaps inevitably) to questions of institutional access. In recognition of these constraints, my summary is split between a longing for the future and a frustrated looking back (yet again) in hopes that Canada's large art institutions will finally catch up with us.[1]

The greatest reservation that I have regarding the organization of this material is my decision to conflate the Vancouver and Toronto sessions.[2] Throughout the Vancouver program I felt slightly out of my element. During the rather feisty session in Toronto, artist Robert Houle said that in British Columbia, "Native artists come from a much stronger traditional culture – there the differences will be much more acute." In view of this comment, I was looking forward to some exciting debate, but in Vancouver, the most spirited institutional critiques were made by participants from outside British Columbia. (Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun was a notable exception.) I'm not sure whether this simply reflected the opinions of those who happened to show up (it seemed there were fewer local artists at the Vancouver session than at the Toronto session) or whether it is indicative of something more significant.

Given the under-representation of local contemporary artists, you can imagine my dismay when I looked across at the Vancouver panel that I was leading and realized that, although Loretta Todd and I have both spent many years in the region, none of us represented a local community. This was, I believe, a regrettable accident of scheduling, but I mention it to identify an absence that will likely be felt in this text as well. Also, because both sessions involved participants from many different places, readers may well identify distinct regional concerns by referring to individual statements and arguments, which I have tried to present as fully as possible.

This essay has been rather recklessly divided between the institutional critique that we seem obliged to have in order to wrench ourselves out of the past (again) and the cultural criticism that needs to occur in order for us to have a future. I describe this division as reckless because these are not discrete categories at all – they are significantly enmeshed clusters of ideas. The reason I make a distinction is because I hope that it will establish or sharpen our yearning for a smarter, better future. I hope it will encourage us to make some real headway in spite of a colonial past that is voraciously greedy against our progress. This future that I imagine – that I want to bring to the present so we don't have to whip-saw so violently between past and future – is so exciting that I can't see how we can resist it.

Institutional Access (*Déjà vu* All Over Again)

Before we ask what we want from mainstream institutions of art and culture, we must first decide if we want them at all. The possibility of an autonomous system of institutions run by First Nations was raised early on in the Toronto discussions. Robert Houle set the stage when he cautioned artists to consider themselves "First Nations first" and to be aware that it is not worth having a dialogue with the mainstream if it means that we lose our culture in the process. Barry Ace, the director of the Indian Art Centre in Ottawa, expressed his desire to use his own institution as an alternative to the mainstream, "counting coup," as he put it, on the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs who oversee the Centre. Ace said that he had decided not to waste his energy on trying to work with the larger mainstream institutions.

> *We've shifted the centre. I no longer look at these institutions as our centre anymore, I look at what we're doing as the centre. When we start putting energy into developing our own discourse, our own writing, our own art history in terms of those perspectives, then I draw positive energy from that, because I find this head-banging with institutions all the time is really, really frustrating.*

Ace went on to note the irony that in spite of the large international audience interested in the art of Canada's First Nations, "we're so marginalized in this country, which is our homeland." His strategy is often to bypass national institutions. "We have a big show coming up and we'll probably open it internationally because the institutions in this country aren't ready for it. It's kind of embarrassing when you think about it.[3]

Rounding out the articulation of venues for contemporary art run by First Nations, Morgan Wood also reminded us of the Urban Shaman Gallery in Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan collectives Tribe and Sakewewak. Artist Mike MacDonald spoke about the possibilities of the Internet as a vehicle for contemporary art – a vehicle that he feels Canadian Native artists have been especially quick and successful in exploiting. Clive Robertson suggested that although large institutions need to make space for First Nations art and curators, the real experimentation and responsiveness to community will happen in the more progressive environment of artist-run centres, which deserve a larger share of the existing funding. "These |large| institutions ... were meant to civilize all of us. The community-based organizations as well as the Native cultural centres and the artist-run centres were set up to do something else."

Many participants spoke of the need for Native artists to have, as Richard Fung put it, "freedom to make inroads" into all Canadian institutions. Curator Lee-Ann Martin, herself a veteran of many institutional struggles, said, "I get criticized all the time because they see me as a sell-out |for being| in the institution |but| we can do our own thing, determine our own terms, frameworks and definitions. It's not an either/or – its a huge, complex and also." We will all choose our own strategies, based on our individual priorities, concerns, and abilities.

The discussion of mainstream versus alternative systems was complicated by a further thread: the discussion of responsibility to particular audiences or communities. Tom Hill, for example, noted that the interests of First Nations contemporary artists cannot always be conflated with those of First Nations communities in general. His own experience as director of the Woodland Cultural Centre suggested to him that his local community often felt alienated by certain types of exhibitions. "We're a very community-oriented space, but I feel that as I do more of these academic or scholarly shows it begins to isolate the community. I would have people go in and just walk through and then that's it. They don't interact with the themes I have on the wall, but I'll have another show in which they immediately plug in." Douglas Worts, an educator at the Art Gallery of Ontario, noted that the question of obligation to the community is "one that institutions of culture don't have a very good handle on period ... with the amount of money poured into mainstream institutions |they should| be better at being able to nurture the sense of community integrity and groundedness that exists across our community."

Although we might argue about the meaning and value of "groundedness," Worts raises one of the most vexing problems facing all contemporary art: its famous estrangement from life. How does an artist or an institution reach a broad public without pandering or losing their criticality? I agree with Jolene Rickard, who said, that this does not mean we should abandon our own intellectual projects. Rickard made it clear that she was not comfortable with how scholarship and academia were being addressed, and that we shouldn't discount the importance to Native cultural theory of projects such as the feminist movement and the work of other political intellectuals of colour. She argued that we need and can be inspired by "border intellectuals, people who are working in multiple cultural sites, and are deconstructing their own otherness while at the same time critiquing the West." These debates, she argued, have the potential to reach a much larger audience. "I have grand visions of what we are as nations. Our people can be on top of that intellectual heap ... I'd suggest that rather than looking at these institutions as impenetrable, that it's a question of finding the ways in which we map those relationships."

Rickard emphasized that although this may be a long process, there is hope, and she emphasized the African American intellectual community as evidence that hierarchies can be penetrated.

These points are well taken. However, while I think the continued development of Native critical intellectuality may give us access to institutions and relative success, it will not necessarily solve the problems of class that tend to accompany intellectual culture. In the case of Rickard's example of African American intellectual accomplishment for example, it remains an unfortunate fact that these intellectuals, like intellectuals everywhere, remain an elite among their own communities. It could be argued that African American intellectuals or Native intellectuals are better placed or more highly motivated to reconcile this divide, but in the case of Native intellectuals, a crucial discourse around class differences, yet to be clearly articulated, remains submerged in the issues of race to which it is obviously linked. This does not mean that we should abandon our intellectual projects, but rather that we need to ensure that issues of class and community relevance become explicit in out critiques. If we are able to somehow close or even shrink the art/life gap, we will have achieved something quite extraordinary.

My own contribution to this discussion was to ask not whether we ought to infiltrate as many types of cultural spaces as possible, but instead, whether these different spaces will foster different sorts of issues and debates. Native contemporary artists have been comfortable focusing on the important critique of Western hegemony in a highly public way, but we have only begun to turn that critical lens back on our own subjectivity, of which we retain a largely celebratory attitude. To be sure, this attitude is an act of resistance, but many of us may be reaching a point where we would like to exceed it. In which spaces will this occur? In the case of the Native press – which has a longer standing alternative presence than First Nations-run artist centres – critical discussions do happen. However I had the experience of being privately criticized for airing community "dirty laundry" when I challenged the racist views of former American Indian Movement leader Russell Means on inter-marriage and cultural hybridity in an article I wrote for FUSE Magazine (Hill 1998). Will these sorts of pressures effect a kind of self-censorship on Native artists, as Fragnito suggests in her essay? In my dream world, we would all have the intellectual self-confidence of Jolene Rickard and would pursue these sorts of issues wherever we could.

I believe we do want the large institutions to make space for us. (I assume that even Barry Ace, although he has directed his energies elsewhere, would not object to this occurring.) Given this desire, can we trust that the institutions themselves will come through? Certainly one of the main themes of the conference turned out to be exasperation at going through this exercise yet again. As Jim Logan put it, "How many lives have got to go under the bridge, how many people have to drop out because of frustration ... before some sort of imprint is made on all of these institutions across Canada? We should have institutional directors here – if we can't go to them we should go to our politicians." My worry is that the large institutions will make a mistake, that they will see the emergence of artists from diverse cultural backgrounds as a trend of the late 1980s and early 1990s – a fashion that has come and gone. The problem is that people like me have become accustomed to seeing First Nations artists such as Carl Beam and Rebecca Belmore showing at high-profile venues such as the Power Plant in Toronto. Now that these artists no longer seem a priority for that institution, I'm starting to go through withdrawal. It's making me cranky and mean, because having seen the possibilities I'm simply not willing to go back. More importantly, I think such exclusion misses a fundamental social reality: Canadian society has changed, and, as Clive Robertson so forcefully put it, "of course the museums have to employ Aboriginal and non-white curators and historians. That is their future. They have no other future." Richard Fung noted that, in our increasingly diverse society, the question of First Nations inclusion goes beyond a simple Euro-Canadian/First Nations dynamic.

> *I came here as an immigrant from the Caribbean. I grew up on Cowboy and Indian films, so there's a certain pre-knowledge that many of us bring ... I'd come [to the AGO] and what this institution teaches you is who is important in this country, what the voices are that make up this country, what the history of this country is. If Aboriginal voices and images are absent here, its a very strong message not just to Native people and Euro-Canadians, but also to other people like myself who come here.*

The sense that I got from many Native participants was that institutions ought to imagine the Native community not as a resource to consult regarding how to show our art, but rather as collaborators with whom to work on increasingly equal terms. As Morgan Wood bluntly put it, the issue is "jobs, jobs, jobs." Much dissatisfaction was also aired about the practice in large institutions of hiring First Nations curators on a temporary basis, using outside funding sources such as the Canada Council, and ending these positions when the external funding runs out. Barry Ace said that these temporary positions allow institutions to "take a resident, use them, suck the life blood out of them, take that information, and then get another one."[4]

One crucial question was whether in the era of diminished public funding, large institutions would give up some of their own resources to make room for First Nations projects. Loretta Todd reminded us of a quote from Trinh T. Minh-ha: "When they say you can have more, that means they won't have less." But, Todd noted, now is a time of "having less, being quiet, and taking up less space." Ruth B. Phillips argued that we need to view the slowness of Native inclusion in mainstream institutions as symptomatic of a general government de-investment in public institutions, which have had their budgets slashed by more than half at the same time as university funding is going down. She suggested that we need to join together to put pressure "where it belongs," and that many (although not all) of the "the great difficulties that constrain us are external to the system itself." I agree that we are radically constrained by the "structural adjustments" that Canada has made to its public programs under pressure from the forces of globalization. Nevertheless, while we resist this in whatever ways we can, we still need to make sure that the bits of the pie that still exist are re-distributed equitably. Public institutions must reflect their public in all its diversity.

Presenting Contemporary First Nations Art (The "And Alsos" of the Future)

An interesting way to begin the discussion around how to actually present First Nations art in the gallery might begin with the dilemma of individual versus collective identity. If the uneasiness that Fragnito expressed regarding a particular kind of identity politics is typical of smart young Native artists (I'm not sure that it is, but I'm hoping), then I believe we are in a position to critically reflect on the "Native Identity" that we have constructed over the past few decades.

Fragnito argues that any art made by a Native person ought to be considered Native art; it need not display the signs of "Nativeness", and no one should be kicked out of the club for their choice of form or content. This plea for individual freedom pleases me and I believe it arises out of a genuine cultural self-confidence. As a principle of artistic freedom I would not hesitate to endorse it. However I can't help but recognize the sting in its tail. If any type of art can be Native art, what meaning does the word "Native" carry and why we would bother to deploy it at all.? Paradoxically, the more meaning we fill the word "Native" with, the lighter it becomes. If we expand it to encompass everything, it will cease to have any weight whatsoever.[5] I don't think the term Native is as light as that (although at times I wish it was – I think it is the job of artists to make this word as problematic as possible). Certainly Jolene Rickard was right to remind us that the issue is not just a question of artists doing their own thing, that individual subjectivity isn't the whole story. As she pointed out there are also concerns about the abilities of both Native and non-Native curators to address concepts that Native artists are dealing with, given that some of the dominant issues in our communities are not well received in the mainstream.

It might be helpful to remember that appeals to individual autonomy are in fact the return of an idea rather than something wholly new, but perhaps this idea has returned with a difference. Many First Nations artists working prior to the 1980s made pleas to have their works read as the products of individuals – as art first and Indian art second (Hill 1996, 11). By the mid-1980s the influence of Indian nationalism, combined with the new language of identity politics, resulted in the construction of a collective "Native identity" that we are only now beginning to reflect critically upon. In our earnest haste and determination, I believe we sometimes imagine this identity in a way that is too ontologically stable, too complete and comprehensible. We don't want the concept of "Native identity" to be so hard and fixed that new generations with different experiences or dissenting opinions will have to break themselves against it. This, I think, is Fragnito's concern. At the same time, we don't feel that the term "Native" has ceased to carry meaning.

I hope I am not overly optimistic when I say that individualism is returning with a difference. If we cannot make some sort of dialectical progress between the two horns of our dilemma – individual identity versus collective identity – we will likely lurch back and forth between the two indefinitely. Can we imagine that individualism has returned in a sublated form, that it has gone through an *aufheben*, as Hegel put it, a simultaneous cancelling out and raising up? Has our individualism been through an experience of identity politics and had these lessons grafted into it? And at the same time, might identity politics also now contain some awareness of its own excesses and limitations? Might we not see the heuristic value of that most impossible of all liberal illusions – individual autonomy? I am not sure how this will work out, and where it will go, but I believe that we are on the brink of real critical progress in articulating the real complexity of our experience. As Lee-Ann Martin put it, "It's always a joke you know, if you've got four hundred Indians in a room you've got four hundred points of view. We have to accept those contrasts, conflicts, complexities and not just shut it, because that's part of the healthy dialogue that we need to go forward."

A concrete example of this question is the debate regarding the National Gallery's "Indian room."[6] The exchange began with Art Gallery of Ontario curator Jessica Bradley's statement of support for Fragnito's five recommendations and Bradley's own concern to integrate First Nations' work into contemporary exhibits in a variety of ways rather than creating a "ghettoized gallery." She described her "great problem with the big room that's all Native art that only recently introduced John Abrahms' paintings, which of course have related political issues in them." On one hand, in the year 2000, shows that make a "big statement" around Native artists (or other marginalized artists) risk "a dangerous kind of … ghettoization." On the other hand, integrating the work "may create denial of their specific issues." Clive Robertson replied that the First Nations room at the National Gallery was a weak statement regardless, because it represents a "pared-down version of two important shows – "Indigena" and "Land, Spirit, Power."[7] Robertson argued that by presenting these works as isolated examples of individual artists, the National Gallery has already drained them of much of their contextual meaning and force.

Robert Houle, a co-curator of "Land, Spirit, Power," related his own experience with the space.

> ***The room just seemed to have more and more Native work in it… then I began to hear from the First Nations artists… that it was another form of ghettoization. I said to myself, personally, geez we worked so bloody hard to break down the barriers, we got into the National Gallery, we even got a room in there and now you're bitching. For me I was quite happy to have a "Reservation room" in the National Gallery, I knew that already we were breaking barriers in this beauxs arts palace of Western culture.***

It is an ironic sign of Houle's success that others have the luxury of taking his accomplishments for granted. At the same time, we can all best express our gratitude not just by acknowledging what he and others have accomplished but also by trying to develop our own critical notions about how Native art is best presented.

With this in mind I have to admit that the "Indian Room" makes me uncomfortable too, although I'm always delighted to see the work. Taking a cue from Clive Robertson and my own suggestion that issues of Native identity (and thus Native art) need to progress and broaden, I suggest that this room functions historically. It is an (admittedly somewhat decontextualized) snapshot of the recent past. If we can't see it that way, if that work doesn't start looking like the past soon, it will mean we're not making progress.

I realize that I may have run up against a point made by Jolene Rickard. She argued that addressing certain issues – for example, the question of land – have become curatorial taboos. Rickard claimed that people act as though these issues have been used up, but this is indicative of a Western penchant for privileging novelty that we need not succumb to. Rickard's suggestion is interesting and I regret that I lacked the wit to invite her to develop it further.

This issue needs to be clarified so that we can see where (or whether) it conflicts with a desire for what I optimistically suggest might be progress. It may be useful to distinguish novelty of subject matter from novelty of approach to that subject matter. If land continues to be an issue, does it follow that our understanding and representation of it will also continue to be the same? If so, then I think we'll all have the right to be bored. We might also distinguish between two types of novelty that have arisen with Western modernism. The first type arises fairly explicitly out of the logic of consumerism and the demand for new goods to sell. The second type is the new ideas and art forms that were deployed by the critical avant-garde as it struggled to theorize and respond to the rapid cultural changes that occurred with the rise of capitalism. We might contest the linkages between these two phenomena (and shudder at the speed with which the former is able to co-opt the latter), but surrendering the critical project altogether would signal total defeat. At the moment, First Nations artists are as pressured by global consumer capitalism as anyone, and as long as these material relations persist, the market and other contexts of art production will be shaped by them. The only resistance is a self-reflexive criticality that can respond flexibly and intelligently to changing circumstances.

When we think about how to show contemporary First Nations art, we can ask the same kinds of questions we would ask about any potential exhibition. Do the works hang together in a meaningful way? Are there themes in common? Are there interesting comparisons or contrasts that can be drawn from the juxtaposition of various works? Does the exhibit speak about a particular movement or moment in history? The simple fact of their creation by Native artists is no longer reason enough to show Native works together.

I believe that the future of Native art is going to be as expansive as Jolene Rickard suggests, and that our work will sit less comfortably in its own little reservation rooms. I look forward to a day when a Native curator will mount the works currently displayed in the National Gallery's "Indian Room" as a retrospective acknowledgment of the concerns of a period. We can only hope that it will look like the exciting beginning of something that we, here today, have yet to imagine.

Notes

1. What annoys me about being forced to repeat this debate is that it seems to retard progress in articulating the complexities of our subjectivity. Put another way, I find that fighting with institutions makes me stupid. It reduces me to uttering the simplistic "us and them" dualisms that, unfortunately, at times accurately describe situations where exclusion is crude and categorical.
2. My second greatest reservation is that I've also chosen to surrender the narrative thread of the discussions in order to organize the material thematically – otherwise the editor of this book might just as well publish an edited transcript. To compensate for this

disordering, I've tried to quote or paraphrase often. I hope that everyone involved will find that their ideas have been accurately reported.

3. The Indian Art Centre tours many of its exhibitions internationally, often through Canadian consulates around the world.

4. Lee-Ann Martin makes this point in her essay. It is worth noting that, although other institutions have been slow to follow its lead, the progressive policies of the Canada Council are the significant result of the efforts of Martin and others who worked for change in that organization.

5. Shifting metaphors for a moment to appropriate a line from Hegel, we could say that the term "Native art" would become "the night ... in which all cows are black" (Hegel 1977, 9).

6. The old art-versus-ethnography/anthropology debate is a somewhat different take on similar concerns about ghettoization. For example, is the Canadian Museum of Civilization really the Museum of Trivialization, as Mike MacDonald put it? I trust that essayists for other sessions will have cause to take up this question where I can't.

7. Both of these exhibitions were held in 1992. "Indigena" was developed by the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and "Land, Spirit, Power" by the National Gallery of Canada.

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Epilogue

[Aboriginal] [Representation] [in the Museum]

Articulations of the Creative, the Organic and the Instrumental

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Clive Robertson

The stakes [of a struggle] only become obvious by considering who the players are, what forces are at play, and what possible outcomes are being imagined. Identifying the politics of any struggle ultimately requires a map, not only of the actors and agents, but of what I shall call the agencies of this struggle. This points to one of the most difficult theoretical issues: the relationship of subjects, actors and agency. This relationship holds the key to understanding how history is made, how articulations are put into place. This process is not necessarily intended or conscious. More importantly the author of an action, the speaker of a discourse, may not be the actual agency which is, through such actions and discourses, struggling to bend history in specific ways, to specific interests and goals. While an action or a discourse is constructed here, it may have effects elsewhere, for another purpose altogether.

Grossberg (1992, 113–14)

I observe the theories of modernism and postmodernism, and feel that there is something missing, or more insidiously, that their theories seek to impose a world view, and to assimilate my view into theirs, even while they preach multiplicity. This process of examination of the colonialism of art must therefore examine the point at which the terms "modernist" and "postmodernist" intersect with our history.

Todd (1992, 72)

It's a wonderful life: When a real estate-seeking collector rings,
a museum gets its wings.

anon.

The task assigned to me by my colleague, Lynda Jessup, the prime convener of the Toronto and Vancouver sessions, was to provide a critique of the workshop series. In view of the six preceding cogent "After Essays," I will stretch this assignment to include an opportunity to exercise the terms of cultural politics – the aesthetic practices that challenge the mainstream – from and onto the common policies of art and anthropological museums.

The starting points of the conference (and there were many) were introduced by the conveners (in their choice of workshop titles, topics, and leaders) and by participants (both those who presented papers and those who did not). Native and non-Native intellectuals, speaking from their overlapping roles as artists, teachers, critics, curators, and historians, brought to the discussions their experiences of working with museums and an array of other sites including cultural centres, community organizations, artist-run centres, art galleries, and colleges.

One topic of the conference as consultative exercise can be correctly read as an opening to resolve the complex and plural nation-defining issue of producing displays that situate historical Aboriginal material alongside early examples of Euro-Canadian art. A second arising and possible antithetical topic concerned the need to construct new Native museums or to strengthen existing community-based alternative institutions. While it is not easy, given the appeal of historical institutions, to transform collector-philanthropists into patrons of newer initiatives, the time to have these discussions is precisely when regional and national museums are brought into being or are considering expansions. How, for example, does the post-workshop announcement of Ken Thompson's donation of his considerable collection of historic Canadian art (and Thompson's assistance in the construction costs of a new wing in which to house it) help or hinder the re-balancing of Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian art at the AGO? (*The Globe and Mail*, 25 January 2001)

This question leads indirectly to other questions – neither new nor unusual – concerning the continuing functional relevance of regional museums as flagships or hubs that serve, or are served by, historical and contemporary cultural works and the producers or custodians of those works. For the many who choose to cooperate with museums, the desire for "recognition of (inter)relationships" (a phrase used by Gerald McMaster) cannot be satisfied in take-it-or-leave-it either-or binaries. And yet the simple term "negotiation" – recognizing Loretta Todd's proper skepticism about the applications of cultural theory and politics – within the context of First

Nations cultural (inter)relationships, is not free of value or history. I can, therefore, only point to the improved shifts in representation and to the differences and similarities of ideas and commentaries brought forward in these institutional debates.

In 1968 the Art Gallery of Ontario held a seminar, "Are Art Galleries Obsolete?" There was a panel on the "Social Psychology of Art" and two panels on "Progressive Innovations," but there were no speaking roles for women (as artists, curators, or historians). Moreover, one of the three (white, male) artists who did speak was commended for his youth, his bright clothing ("an ornate macro-buckle was clasped on belted white jeans") and, most of all, his civility (Cameron 1969, 23). As for the regional museum as a hub, Dr. Brice, the curator at the London Public Library and Art Museum "questioned the validity of centralized programming or control of visual arts programming in the province," a reference to the 1996 promotion of the Art Gallery of Toronto to provincial status (Cameron 1969, 9).

Finally, mention could be made of the asymmetrical responses of workshop participants to the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Vancouver Art Gallery and what these responses imply about either institution. In Toronto, the critical focus was on the historical and contemporary art responsibilities of the Art Gallery of Ontario. There was little reference to the Royal Ontario Museum as an anthropological museum – the site of both the controversial 1989 exhibition "Into The Heart of Africa" (Tator, Henry, Mattis 1998) and "Indian Art '74," an earlier pivotal exhibition curated by Tom Hill, of wide-ranging "individual and tribal expressions, bringing new meanings to the term 'Indian Art' on economic, cultural, and political levels" (McMaster 1994, 63). In Vancouver, despite contestations between artists and curatorial communities over routine matters of administration and accountability (as documented in the local art media or "central Canadian" publications such as *Parallelogramme*/*Mix* or *Fuse*), the Vancouver Art Gallery was not the main focus of criticism. Related or not to the significant presence and interests of West Coast Native artists, it was the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology that attracted attention and debate.

The Workings of Culture, Policy and Norms of Representivity

In response to the question "How does culture work and how can we observe representational shifts in popular representations of images/texts," cultural critic Lisa Henderson suggests a graph: one axis represents the categories "of, by, and for" and the other represents the categories of "dominant and non-dominant groups." Such a graph might be used to determine whether the images seen in popular media representations such as museum exhibitions or television productions are *of, by, or for* dominant or non-dominant groups. Since the popular media has favoured images *of* non-dominant groups *by* dominant groups *for* dominant groups, we can assess – within obvious limits of oversimplification – the degree to which there has been a change in representation or a commitment to make culture work differently. Henderson's reference to (American) constitutional promises ("of, by, and for the people") leads to considerations of culture, policy, and the museum (McSherry and Simon 1995).

An important museum and cultural policy lesson occurred when the National Gallery of Canada – a nation-building apparatus – made an executive decision to cancel an exhibition of work that related a difficult moment in history. I am referring to the 1995 exhibition of Dennis Tourbin, the late Ottawa artist whose paintings and performances re-presented the media coverage of the FLQ October Crisis of 1970. The exhibition was cancelled because of fears that its slot would coincide with an expected announcement of a referendum on Québec sovereignty and the federalist and sovereignist ideological campaigns that were guaranteed to follow. Gallery officials defended the decision to cancel the show by arguing that the Gallery was "in the business of art not politics." The National Gallery tried to convince a disbelieving news media (who broke the story and followed it for three months – a controversy longer than the *Voice of Fire* purchase) that its operations were independent of the government, that, in times of political controversy, there were no hotlines between the Gallery and government ministers (Robertson 1997, 25). No allowance was made for the obvious ongoing relations with the needs of federal cultural policy. There was no recognition of the the connection between cultural policy and the modern museum's originating relationships in fields of social management.

Within cultural policy studies, the two common abbreviated definitions of culture – the artistic output of a particular person or group (*creative*), and the all-encompassing concept of how we live (*organic*) – are linked to the bureaucratic definition of policy as a regularized and systematized statement for action (*instrumental*). Following the emergence in nineteenth-century Europe of new fields of social management in which culture became both the *object* and *instrument* of government, the artistic and anthropological senses of culture became linked to a notion of care – a duty encouraged and modeled by government. This duty, Toby Miller argues, "requires us to tend and improve ourselves and others through exposure to the best creative work produced by the best persons at their personal best. Governments, unions, training institutions, community groups and profit-making bodies all support, fund, regulate, advertise, train, and evaluate creative persons; in fact they often articulate the very criteria deployed to make possible the use of the word *creative*"(Miller 1993, 15). Tony Bennett, who contributed to this body of research on governmentality and museums, further suggests that

> *[these same] emerging nineteenth century governmental relations between power and culture are characterized by the degree to which forms of culture needed to be valorized as embodiments of universal norms of civilization in order to be rendered governmentally useful.* Yet this process also served to generate alternate demands and oppositions from the zones of exclusion and margins which it itself establishes *(emphasis mine). Demands that representational parity be given to women's [or First Nations] art in art galleries or to the histories of subordinate social strata in history museums are thus ones generated out of, fuelled by, the norms of representivity embodied in the rhetoric of public galleries and museums. Earlier collections of valued objects ... partly because of the limited influence of democratic and egalitarian philosophies but also because the principles of curiosities and wonder which governed the constitution of such collections meant that no general political value could be attached to the question of what was included within, or excluded from, such collections. For, where objects were collected for their curiosity value, it was their singularity that mattered not their representativeness".*
>
> Bennett (1992, 78–9)

Unlike art museums or arts funding agencies, the governmentalization of art and culture is more readily admitted within alternative art discourse and historical Native political organizations. Gerald McMaster, writing about the Liberal government's 1969 White Paper to abolish the Indian Act and Harold Cardinal's rebuttal (known as the Red Paper) in *The Unjust Society* (1970), suggests that, "[at this time] it would not be far-fetched to say that the Native political leadership greatly influenced the thinking and action of Native artists to form cohesive groups to address common issues aimed at negotiating space within the art world. Politicians, for their part, understood the value of using artists and their works to give cultural identity to their purposes" (McMaster 1994, 61).

To pose questions about "Aboriginal representation in the museum" then is to engage theories and histories in which museums are seen as technologies of culture, and to formulate a practical politics in relation to them. Such technologies (after Foucault) refer to a "machinery" of institutional and organizational structures and processes that produce particular configurations of knowledge and power (McGuigan 1996, 17).

A challenge to the norms of writing history comes through work in cultural studies and earlier theories of articulation that have been elaborated in order to address questions involving the structure of the relationships within which cultural practices must be located. Lawrence Grossberg writes that, "articulation offers a theory of contexts where the context is not taken-for-granted as a background but is only available at the end of the analysis. Understanding a practice involves theoretically and historically (re)constructing its context. *Paradoxically, a practice is not where it is (enacted, for example) but at all those sites where its existence makes a difference in the world, at the sites of its effects* ... Articulation links this practice to that effect, this text to that meaning, this meaning to that reality, this experience to those politics ... Articulation is both the practice of history and its critical reconstruction, displacement and renewal" (Grossberg 1992, 53–4, emphasis added).

Coincidentally, the chapter on "Power and Daily Life" from Grossberg's book, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* begins with an account of a conference he attended at the opening of the Canadian Museum of Civilization. While acknowledging the critique of the new museum and the coding of structural social inequalities within it, Grossberg reminds us that power is always organized into a variety of structures that reach into and through both daily life and the social formation. He is wary of "the critic [who] always finds domination where he or she expects to find it, and moreover, [where] it always takes the forms that he or she knows it would" (Grossberg 1992, 92). Grossberg's theme of the relations of theory, politics, and passion and his anti-essentialist maps of hopes and disappointments resonate across the call of the AGO-VAG workshop series to identify, discuss, and debate desirable (and possible) general and specific policy reforms affecting Aboriginal representation in art galleries or anthropological museums.

Articulation, History and Momentum

Judging by the related experiences of many artists – among them First Nations artists, artists of colour, women artists, gay and lesbian artists, and even white male artists such as myself – curators, historians, or arts funding professionals that administrate display programs do not like being told what to do. However, this "telling" or "talking back" should not be interpreted as a challenge to the autonomy of their research. On the contrary, in the case of larger museums, it is a reminder that elsewhere the green light for curatorial projects and their material frequently requires review before professional and community peers and non-peers, i.e., before those who reserve the right to be sympathetic, hostile or indifferent.

Institutional curators will, if pushed on matters of mandate and service, argue that their responsibility requires a balancing of their intrinsic obligations to institutional coherence with the forceful expectations of other clients (or more recently stakeholders). The mix of curatorial and institutional attentions that take prioritiy can include: the undifferentiated "public"; educators; collectors; rarely seen works of art held in vaults; museum volunteers and their insatiable love for a limited range of historical blockbusters; philanthropists; board advisors; focus-group consultants; public funding agencies; and, under the subjections of discourse, attentions to the regional, national, or international habits and tastes of curators in other museums. Those who struggle for new production initiatives or a share of local resources to make change happen inside or outside of established institutions become rightly impatient with museums, arts funding agencies, art history departments, or publicly funded art magazines. The rhetoricized counter-demands around emerging critical practices and social formations, alternative histories and theory, are addressed to mostly forgotten obligations and promises made public earlier in mandates and policies. Such professional frictions ultimately lead to questions of accountability, knowledge, expertise, and authority – questions that surface exactly at those infrequent moments set aside for community soundings and consultations. On the more difficult of these occasions you might feel the need to either "blurt out" (as I may have just done) or to sit in silence, feeling the pain shooting up your back.

That said, unexpected major policy shifts do periodically happen. Under the signs of anti-racism and racial equality, First Nations cultural producers, in collaboration with their artists of colour colleagues, brought cultural equity policies to the Canada Council for the Arts. In the Council's subsequent restructuring, the shift in areas ranging from hiring policies to changes in the definition of "professionalism" was unprecedented in this agency's history. Joyce Zemans, Chris Chreighton-Kelly, and all those who served on the specific Advisory Committees (some of whom participated in the workshop series) deserve ongoing recognition. That said, in the years between 1988 and 1996, a number of seemingly unpredictable and unrelated correspondences came together. These include:revisions to the Multiculturalism Act; the introduction of the Employment Equity Act; the success of the National Native Artists Symposia (1978–1993); the formation of SCANA (Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry) in 1982 and the work leading up to the 1992 "Indigena" exhibition and conference at the Canadian Museum of Civilization; the political embarrassment of Oka; the ultimatum of the Minquon Panchayat coalition of First Nations and artists of colour to the artist-run movement; and the new, ambitious management at the Canada Council after the failed SSHRC-Canada Council merger. (Young Man 1988, Tuer 1992, Martin 1995, Berland 2000, Gagnon 2000). I and others have argued elsewhere that during a time of federal deficit cutting and the Canada Council's own corporate re-structuring, the Council's new management team used the necessity of the cultural equity project as a way to mask both the unpopular door closing to ongoing arts community policy input on other matters and the related de-funding of artist and art organizational representative bodies (Harvey 1995, Robertson 1999). Then and subsequently the Canada Council for the Arts has shown its ambitions to be the Wal-Mart of Canadian arts advocacy and policy. The convening in Ottawa (December 2000) of a conference to kick-start an International Federation of the Arts illustrated the Council's renewed usefulness to Canada's foreign policy goals of exporting its multicultural and "cultural diversity" policy achievements. (Mackey 1999, CPAC 2000)

Energies and opportunities for strategic change under more modest circumstances and places – promises made or alluded to within the live and documented proceedings of these workshops – necessitate negotiations for tactical, and therefore limited and imperfect, compromise. (A proposal for a First Peoples Advisory Committee to work with and monitor aboriginal representation at the AGO was introduced but not resolved.)

What are the limitations of a pragmatic approach to such policy exercises? According to Bertolt Brecht, "truth" is of no use unless it is communicated to someone who can do something with it. For Jim McGuigan, "'truth' it would seem, is what the social agents engaged in specific institutional practices, such as museum curators are prepared to believe." How, McGuigan asks, "[can] this excessively pragmatic conception of truth be reconciled with a critical conception of truth that does not depend upon ready and willing acceptance by the present agents of power in order to claim validity[?]" (McGuigan 1996, 18).

There is comfort in the upsets of common sense by cultural theory when it is applied to the projects of historiography for the purposes of better comprehending and changing the present. These productive workshops are not limited to revising the ways that the Art Gallery of Ontario or the Vancouver Art Gallery go about their business. To return to Grossberg's characteristics of a practice, the effects of what was said, the actions that were proposed in Toronto or in Vancouver (or even in this volume) are as likely to occur in another time and place. One example of this is a 1940s national post-war reconstruction proposal by Canadian artists to set up a network of community art centres as an alternative to establishing a chain of regional art museums. These lobbying actions did not resurface as circulated history until the appearance of Maria Tippett's *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission* in 1990. Again the effects of post-war policy discourses were well after (and therefore disconnected from) more recent social formations that negotiated the establishment of Indian Cultural Educational Centres, Native Friendship Centres, or artist-run centres for the production of contemporary art. Perhaps only the Maisons de la culture in Québec formed in the mid-eighties approximated the spirit of the earlier community art centre movement. A similar upset of curatorial common sense could – or could not – occur in further applications of programs suggested in the workshop by Lee-Ann Martin. As an alternative model Martin proposes an art gallery staffed by Native curator-historians displaying traditional Native materials and Native contemporary art as the knowledge field into which contemporary art from other artistic traditions and cultural backgrounds might then be situated.

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Appendix

A Working Discussion Aboriginal Representation in the Art Gallery

Workshop Series Program

Two of the three panel members in each session have been asked to prepare papers. The three panel members will provide a brief (10 minute) discussion of issues at each symposium venue to stimulate debate, before the workshop leader opens the floor to discussion. The discussion is the basis of the workshop, and is intended to focus on the workshop's stated aim.

Reception

Friday, March 3	8-10 pm	*Members' Lounge, Art Gallery of Ontario*
Friday, March 24	8-10 pm	*Room 410, Vancouver Art Gallery*

Saturday, March 4	*Jackman Hall, Art Gallery of Ontario*
Saturday, March 25	*Room 403, Vancouver Art Gallery*

9:30-11:30 am
Introduction: On Aboriginal Representation in the Art Gallery

Art Gallery of Ontario

Proceedings will be opened by Vern Harper, Cree elder

Opening Remarks: Dennis Reid, Chief Curator, Art Gallery of Ontario; Lynda Jessup, Department of Art, Queen's University; Shannon Bagg, Doctoral Candidate, Queen's University

Panel: Gerald McMaster, Canadian Museum of Civilization; Tom Hill, Woodland Cultural Centre; Marie-Paule Robitaille, Musée de la civilisation, Québec

Discussion Leader: Richard Fung, artist and critic

Vancouver Art Gallery

Proceedings will be opened by Debra Sparrow, Musqueam Nation

Opening Remarks:	Diana Augattis, Associate Director/Chief Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery, Lynda Jessup, Queen's University, Shannon Bagg, doctoral candidate, Queen's University
Panel:	Chief Bill Cramner, U'Mista Cultural Centre; Wendy Brady, Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre, University of New South Wales; Marie-Paule Robitaille, Musée de la civilisation, Québec
Discussion Leader:	Richard Fung, artist and critic

Aim: *To determine whether Aboriginal representation in the art gallery setting is a viable or appropriate way to afford Aboriginal histories and aesthetics a place within the history of artistic production in Canada.*

Like the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario presents a history of Euro-Canadian art beginning in seventeenth-century New France. Although no historical narrative is followed explicitly, the installations at Vancouver Art Gallery also feature the work of Euro-Canadians, the emphasis being placed instead on artists from British Columbia, both historical and contemporary. In either case, the prospect of displaying historical Aboriginal material alongside mainstream Euro-Canadian art of the same era poses certain challenges to conventional curatorial practice, among them the fact that the representation of Aboriginal culture in close proximity to existing temporal and stylistic categories of Western art represents a serious challenge to the distinctly Euro-Canadian parameters that currently frame the history of artistic production in Canada. The purpose of this workshop is to set the stage for the remaining workshops by interrogating, and perhaps establishing through participant consensus, some of the central premises of discussion.

Issues to be explored in this workshop include whether mainstream art galleries are an appropriate setting for objects never intended as art or, whether a shift to the display of visual culture, rather than art, could be made in existing gallery installations; nationalizing and regionalizing Aboriginal histories; representing multifarious traditions at once; defining the nature of curatorial collaborations with Native and non-Native audiences.

Lunch 11:30-1:00 pm

1:00-2:30 pm
Authenticity and Commoditization: Tourist Art and "Craft" in the Gallery?

Art Gallery of Ontario

Panel:	Moira McCaffrey, McCord Museum of Canadian History, McGill University; Ruth Phillips, Department of Art History, Department of Anthropology, and Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia; Joan Acland, Department of Art History, Concordia University.
Discussion Leader:	Jolene Rickard, Department of Art History, New York State University

Vancouver Art Gallery

Panel:	Ruth Phillips, Department of Art History, Department of Anthropology, and Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia; Aaron Glass, graduate student, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia; William McLennan, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia
Discussion Leader:	Jolene Rickard, Department of Art History, New York State University

Aim: *To address problems associated with displaying historical Aboriginal material in spaces with or alongside Euro-Canadian art of the same period.*

At present, Aboriginal historical cultures are represented almost exclusively in Euro-Canadian painting, sculpture, and graphics in the Canadian historical wing of the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Canadian installations at the Vancouver Art Gallery. One strategy for effecting change and for securing Aboriginal cultures a presence at the AGO is the introduction of early Woodlands material in exhibition spaces of Euro-Canadian art of the same period and region, including early work produced for the Euro-Canadian market. Historical examples of basketry and weaving from among Pacific Coast Aboriginal peoples, similarly, might find a place in the Vancouver Art Gallery in the same way contemporary pieces by Rena Point Bolton and Isabel Rorick appeared in the VAG's 1996 show, "Topographies: Aspects of Recent B.C. Art." Among the many challenges posed by this idea is the introduction of what have been called tourist art and craft traditions into the gallery setting.

Potential topics for this workshop include the implications of displaying tourist art and examples of the craft traditions alongside historical Euro-Canadian work; the placement of a gender-sensitive Aboriginal art history within the conventional gender framework of Western art/historiography; resources and space and/or the challenge of representing diverse, continuous artistic traditions in a gallery setting; historicizing Aboriginal art and/or aestheticizing Aboriginal culture.

Break 2:30-3:15

3:15-4:45 pm
Depending on Donations: Displaying What's in the Collection

Art Gallery of Ontario

Panel:	Jeff Thomas, artist and independent curator, and Anna Hudson, Art Gallery of Ontario; Trudy Nicks, Royal Ontario Museum; Carol Podedworny, University of Waterloo Art Gallery.
Discussion Leader:	Lynn Hill, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia

Vancouver Art Gallery

Panel:	Jeff Thomas, artist and independent curator, and Anna Hudson, Art Gallery of Ontario; Robin Wright, Burke Museum, University of Washington; Debra Sparrow, artist
Discussion Leader:	Lynn Hill, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia

Aim: *To explore realistic and practical alternatives to displaying only those objects that reside in a gallery's collection.*

Neither the Vancouver Art Gallery nor the Art Gallery of Ontario have collections of historical work by North American Aboriginal peoples. The VAG has a small group of Inuit carvings and prints, a few baskets collected on the north west coast, and two small totem poles, all of which have been displayed infrequently. As a result of a private donation, the Art Gallery of Ontario owns a collection of argillite carvings by Charles Edenshaw and one of his students. In spite of the lack of related material in the gallery, the collection is currently on display in the AGO's Canadian Historical wing. Notwithstanding the significance of the work itself or its inclusion among mainstream Canadian art, the argillite collection, in the absence of any other historic

Northwest Coast material, poses the danger of representing metonymically the whole of Northwest Coast art. While all galleries are limited to some extent by their collections, serious consideration should be given to the impact of displaying sporadic examples of Aboriginal artistic production.

Issues to be explored in this workshop include those relating to collecting policies and donations, and their impact of the installation of "new histories"; integrating Aboriginal artwork into gallery spaces; reflecting continuous aesthetic traditions; potential lending arrangements between museums and galleries.

Sunday, March 5 ***Art Gallery of Ontario***
Sunday, March 26 ***Vancouver Art Gallery***

9:30-11:30
Repositioning Inuit Art: Past and Future Considerations

Art Gallery of Ontario only

Panel:	Christine Lalonde, independent curator; Shannon Bagg, doctoral candidate, Queen's University; Michael Massie, artist
Discussion Leader:	Jean Blodgett, York University

Aim: *To determine how the history of Inuit art can and/or should be presented in a gallery setting with respect to the larger canon of Canadian art.*

Like the National Gallery of Canada and the Winnipeg Art Gallery —both of which house sizeable collections of Inuit art— the Art Gallery of Ontario has permanent exhibition space allocated for the display of Inuit sculpture and graphics. In terms of the chronological layout of the AGO, the exhibition space is situated mid-century, coinciding with James Houston's introduction of soapstone carvings to the South in 1949. The significance and actual nature of Houston's role in the origin and development of contemporary Inuit art practice has been debated by critics and scholars for several decades. In recent years, however, as the so-called fiftieth anniversary of contemporary Inuit art approaches, conventional understanding of Inuit art history — a series of eras marked by southern awareness or involvement — is being called into question.

Potential topics to be explored in this workshop include rethinking the perspective from which Inuit art history is understood and/or presented in southern institutions;

addressing cultural and socio-economic issues unique to Inuit art practice from an art historical perspective and/or within the gallery; situating Inuit art (prehistoric, historic, or contemporary) in a gallery alongside or away from Native and/or Euro-Canadian work of the same era; the significance of 1999 and/or the future of Inuit art history.

9:30-11:30
Dispelling Affinities of the Tribal, the Modern, and the Contemporary

Vancouver Art Gallery only

Panel:	Dolores Churchill, artist; Mike MacDonald, artist; Jay Stewart and Peter McNair, independent curators
Discussion Leader:	Rose Spahan, independent curator, and Doreen Jensen, independent curator

Aim: *To examine potential problems arising from the intersection of Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal art in a mainstream gallery setting.*

The Vancouver Art Gallery devotes permanent space to an installation of work by Emily Carr, as well as work by her contemporaries and by artists whose work is seen to be influenced by her. At the Art Gallery of Ontario, the painting of Emily Carr, like that of the Group of Seven, is also accorded privileged status, and occupies its own gallery. In an effort to move toward an integrated display of historical Canadian art in the Canadian wing, the AGO now proposes to rework the Emily Carr gallery, integrating a display of Native art related to the 1927 "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern." In both cases, Northwest Coast Aboriginal material displayed in or near the existing gallery space would be in danger of appearing as though in the service of Carr's work.

Issues to be explored in this workshop include how to avoid and/or dispel affinities between Aboriginal material and the primitivist tendencies of Euro-Canadian artists; re-thinking/ re-hanging the work of artists like Emily Carr; confronting the canon of Canadian art.

Break 11:00-11:30

11:30-1:00 pm
Historicizing the Emergence of Aboriginal Art: The Contemporary Gallery in Context

Art Gallery of Ontario

Panel:	Lee-Ann Martin, Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery; Skawennati Tricia Fragnito, artist and independent curator; Morgan Wood, independent curator
Discussion Leader:	Richard Hill, artist, critic and independent curator

Vancouver Art Gallery

Panel:	Morgan Wood, independent curator; Andrea Walsh, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria, and Cathi Charles Wherry, Special Projects Coordinator, First Peoples' Cultural Foundation; Margaret Archuleta, Heard Museum of Native American Culture and Art; Loretta Todd, artist
Discussion Leader:	Richard Hill, artist, critic and independent curator

Aim: *To address how contemporary Aboriginal art can and/or should be presented in a gallery with respect to historical Aboriginal aesthetic traditions, mainstream Canadian art, and contemporary art internationally.*

At the Vancouver Art Gallery, Aboriginal contemporary art is not situated historically. It is positioned in relation to Emily Carr's work, within the series of rotating installations that occupy the space devoted to art in British Columbia, or within the gallery's extensive collection of contemporary art. In contrast, the Art Gallery of Ontario is currently in the process of incorporating artwork of the 1960s into the Canadian historical wing of the gallery. In addition to re-situating works by Euro-Canadian artists, such as Jack Shadbolt and Joyce Wieland, this involves the introduction of Aboriginal art (or, more specifically, the work of individual Aboriginal artists who came to prominence and who were celebrated by mainstream art galleries during the 1960s) into the Canadian historical wing.

Potential topics to be explored in this workshop include the advent of the individual Aboriginal artist-genius in the gallery; the imposition of Euro-Canadian notions of artist and artist schools on to Aboriginal cultures and/or communities; relationships between modern or contemporary Aboriginal art and historical Aboriginal material in gallery spaces; Aboriginal art as a vehicle for or source of Aboriginal empowerment;

potential conflicts between self-definition and identity politics; new approaches to the representation and display of contemporary Aboriginal art in the gallery.

Lunch 1:00-2:30

2:30-3:30
Wrap-up Session

Aims: *Recommendations and discussion*

Art Gallery of Ontario

Kanatakta, Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center; Marie-Paule Robitaille, Musée de la civilisation, Québec

Vancouver Art Gallery

Connie Watts, artist; Guy Soiui Durand, artist; Henry Tsang, artist

This symposium has been developed with the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; the Australian High Commission in Ottawa; Queen's University, Office of the Principal; Queen's University, Faculty of Arts and Science; Queen's University, Office of Research Services.

Contributors

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Jean Blodgett is an independent curator and writer. She was director of collections and programs at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario. During the 1980s she worked as an adjunct curator at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, and in the late 1970s she was curator of Inuit art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. In addition she has taught at Carleton University and York University. Her numerous publications include *The Coming and Going of the Shaman: Eskimo Shamanism and Art* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1979), *Kenojuak* (Toronto: Firefly Books, 1985), *North Baffin Drawings* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1986), *In Cape Dorset We Do It This Way* (Kleinburg: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1991) and *Three Women, Three Generations: Drawings by Pitseolak Ashoona, Napatchie Pootoogook and Shuvinai Ashoona* (Kleinburg: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1999).

Wendy Brady is former director of the Aboriginal Research and Resource Centre at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. She is currently director of the Aboriginal Education Centre at the University of Western Sydney. A specialist in Indigenous Australian cultures, she publishes widely on issues of representation, on anti-racism and the power of story-telling, on equity and social justice issues, and on the relationship between indigenous Australian education and globalization. She has most recently contributed an essay on transgendered sexuality to *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Delores Churchill is a Haida artist who specializes in weaving. For many years, she studied museum basket collections to master traditional techniques, which she has been teaching since 1973. The recipient of numerous awards, including an honourary doctorate from the University of Alaska, she has exhibited in Canada, the United States, and Europe, and has placed her works in collections across the United States.

Skawennati Tricia Fragnito is an artist and curator of Mohawk and Italian ancestry. She served for four years on the board of Orobo, an artist-run centre in Montréal, Québec. During this time, she co-founded Nation to Nation, a First Nations artist collective whose projects include "Native Love," "Tatoo Nation," and the virtual exhibition, "Cyber PowWow." One of the first recipients of a Canada Council First People's Curatorial Residency Grant, she did her residency at the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff, Alberta, where she staged "Blanket Statements," "CyberPowWow 2," and "The People's Plastic Princess." Her recent works include a web project for the "I. Witness" exhibition at the Edmonton Art Gallery (November 2000).

Richard Fung is a video artist and critic whose work is represented in collections internationally. A prolific essayist and active speaker, he has made extensive contributions, in both his production and his scholarly work, to current debates in the art world on antiracism, multiculturalism, and the politics of representation. He has also worked as an independent curator, developing programs around issues of race and representation in Canada and abroad. He coordinates the Centre for Independent Visual Media and Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

Aaron Glass's work focuses on both historical and contemporary art and performance on the Northwest Coast. He is currently completing a Ph.D. in anthropology at New York University. Upcoming publications include "Cultural Salvage or Brokerage: The Emergence of Northwest Coast 'Art' and the Mythologization of Mungo Martin," which will appear in a collection on Northwest Coast art edited by Aldona Jonaitis, and "Art, Non-art, and Anti-art: Dialectics of Value for Objects from the Northwest Coast," which is included in a British Museum publication edited by Jonathan King.

Lynn A. Hill is a freelance curator currently living in Vancouver. She has recently completed a two-year curatorial residency at the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology. Over the past six years, she has curated First Nations Art exhibitions for artist-run centres, public galleries, and museums, among them "Re-Presenting" and "Tradition of Change" (McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, 1998 and 1997 respectively), "*Go di'nigoha*, The Women's Mind" (Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario, 1997), "AlterNative: Contemporary Photo Compositions" (Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, 1995), and "Raven's Reprise" (University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, 2000).

Tom Hill is director of the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario. He has worked extensively in the field of Native North American art as both curator and historian. His many exhibition catalogues include *Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native American Identity and Belief* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press in association with the National Museum of the American Indian, 1994), which he co-edited with Richard W. Hill Sr.; *Beyond History* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1989); and the groundbreaking *Norval Morrisseau and the Emergence of the Image Makers* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1984), which he produced with Elizabeth McLuhan in conjunction with an exhibition of the same name. He was also co-chair of the Canadian Task Force on Museums and First Nations.

Richard William Hill is a visual artist, critic, and curator. He has published numerous articles on contemporary art, and is an active participant in debates around Native identity, ethnic nationalism, and appropriation. He co-curated "Sprawl" (Mercer Union, Toronto, 1997) with Sylvie Fortin, David Merritt, and Daniella Snepova. He is currently researching Jimmie Durham's recent work from Europe, focusing on the artist's critique of architecture. He and curator Barbara Fischer are developing a survey exhibition that should provide North American audiences with their first look at this evolving concern in Durham's art. He has recently begun work as a curatorial assistant at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto.

Anna Hudson is the assistant curator of Canadian art at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, where she has worked since 1997. A specialist in Canadian historical art, her most recent exhibitions include "A Collector's Vision: J.S. McLean and Modern Painting in Canada" (Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 1999). She is currently involved in a range of curatorial projects dealing with Aboriginal art and cultural representation, and issues of self-definition and cultural revolution in the 1960s.

Doreen Jensen is an artist, activist, and independent curator. Active in the field for many years, she is a co-founder of the Society for Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry (SCANA), a founding member of the Ksan Association in Hazelton, and a member of the Board of Governors of the Emily Carr Institute for Art and Design in Vancouver, British Columbia. She received a honourary doctorate from the University of British Columbia in 1994, and the WMCA Woman of Distinction Award in Arts and Culture in 1993. Her most recent exhibitions include "Objects and Expressions" (University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, 1998) and "Topographies: Aspects of Recent B.C. Art" (Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, 1996). She exhibits her own work both locally and internationally, and has recently retired from curatorial work to focus on her own practice.

Lynda Jessup teaches Canadian visual culture and museum representation in the Department of Art at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. She has published a number of articles dealing with the politics of representation in the museum, among them a series dealing with the National Gallery of Canada's 1927 "Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern." She is editor of *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

Aldona Jonaitis, director of University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks, is a scholar of Native American art specializing in the Northwest Coast. She has recently edited three collections: *Looking North* (Seattle: University of Alaska Museum by the University of Washington Press, 1998), *A Wealth of Thought: Franz Boas and Native North American Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), and *Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlach* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

Christine Lalonde works at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, Ontario, where she served as acting assistant curator of Inuit art from 1996 to 1999. She writes on topics dealing with the exhibition of Inuit art and the ways in which it is understood by scholars and public alike. Her publications include "How Can We Understand Inuit Art?," an article developed from her Master's thesis.

Lee-Ann Martin is an art historian and former head curator at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina. Her most recent works include *Exposed: Aesthetics of Aboriginal Erotic Art* (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1999), which she produced with Morgan Wood in connection with an exhibition of the same name. She has also acted as First Peoples equity coordinator at the Canada Council for the Arts, and as curator of contemporary Indian art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, where she co-curated the important "Indigena: Perspectives of Indigenous Peoples on 500 Years" (1992) with Gerald McMaster. She is author of *The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion: Contemporary Native Art and Public Art Museums in Canada*, a report submitted to the Canada Council in March 1991.

Moira T. McCaffrey is director of research and exhibitions at the McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montréal, Québec. She has conducted archaeological research in subarctic Québec and Labrador, and on the Îles-de-la-Madeleine in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. She has curated numerous exhibitions in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, including "Marks of the Mi'kmaq Nation." Most recently, she was the project director for the travelling exhibition, "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life" (McCord Museum, Montréal, 1999). She has published numerous papers in the fields of Northeastern archaeology and ethnology, and has edited two volumes: *Wrapped in the Colours of the Earth: Cultural Heritage of the First Nations* (Montréal: McCord Museum, 1992) and, with Pierre Dumas, *En marche entre deux mondes: prehistoire recente au Québec, au Labrador et à Terre-Neuve* (*Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, 1989).

Gerald McMaster is an artist, art historian, and former curator of contemporary Indian art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Québec. He is currently deputy assistant director of cultural resources for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. In conjunction with his curatorial work, he has published extensively in the field of Native North American Art, supplementing major exhibition catalogues such as *Reservation X: The Power of Place in Aboriginal Contemporary Art* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1998) and his co-authored *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992) with numerous essays dealing with contemporary art and the history of Aboriginal art in Canada. He is also an active visual artist; his solo exhibitions include "Crossfires of Identity" (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, 1993), "Savage Graces" (University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, 1992), and "The Cowboy Indian Show" (McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, 1991).

Trudy Nicks is a senior curator in the department of anthropology at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and an associate professor in the department of anthropology at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. She has published articles and catalogues on Métis ethno-history, art, and Indian tourist art. She was co-chair of the Canadian Task Force on Museums and First Nations and is co-editor, with Tom Hill, of *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships between Museums and First Peoples* (Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Museums Association, 1992).

Ruth B. Phillips is director of the Museum of Anthropology and professor of fine art and anthropology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. She has published on historic and contemporary Great Lakes Indian art. Her most recent books include *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), *Native North American Art* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), which she co-authored with Janet Berlo, and *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), which she co-edited with Christopher Steiner.

Jolene Rickard is an artist and art historian who teaches at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She has published a number of essays on the representation of First Nations cultural expressions, and is now developing a critique of the representation of Iroquoian women. Most recently, she co-curated "Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life" (McCord Museum, Montréal, 1999). She exhibited her own work in the group show "Reservation X: The Power of Place in Aboriginal Contemporary Art" (Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, 1998).

Clive Robertson is a media artist, independent curator and cultural critic who teaches cultural theory and contemporary art studies at Queen's University in Kingston.

Ontario. He is curator and author of *Speaking Volumes: The Mediation of Art Practices* (Montréal: Oboro, 1997), and is a senior contributing editor of FUSE *Magazine*. His current book project deals with artists, institutional agency, and the politics of representation in Canada since the 1970s.

Rose Spahan is an artist and independent curator. Her most recent exhibition, "Embrace the Visionaries: Contemporary Works by Emerging Salish Artists" (Richmond Art Gallery, Richmond, 1999), includes her own work in mixed media alongside that of thirteen Salish artists from various backgrounds. In keeping with her well-established emphasis on Indigenous cultural and artistic expression, she is currently working with the Bill Reid Foundation, while maintaining her own practice in Vancouver, where she exhibits often.

Jeff Thomas has been a practicing photographer since 1980. More recently he ventured into curatorial practice with the 1996 exhibition, "Aboriginal Portraits from the National Archives of Canada" (National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 1997). This was followed by "Pride and Dignity" (National Arts Centre, Ottawa, 1998), and more recently, "Emergence from the Shadow: First Peoples' Photographic Perspectives" (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1999). Among his solo exhibitions are "inter/Section" (Indian Art Centre, Hull), "Portraits from the Dancing Grounds" (Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa, 1996), and "Strong Hearts: The Traditional Powwow Dancer" (Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg, 1991).

Andrea Naomi Walsh teaches in the department of anthropology at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. A specialist in Native North American contemporary art, her recent publications include *Situated Knowledge: The Art of Marianne Nicolson* (Indianapolis: Eiteljorg Museum for the American Indian and Western Art, 1999); *Lichen* (Toronto: Toronto Sculpture Garden, 1998), and *From the House of Kawadelkala: Art, Images and Experience of Francis Dick* (Victoria: Maltwood Art Gallery, University of Victoria, 2000).

Robin K. Wright is curator of Native American art at the Burke Museum and associate professor of art history at the University of Washington in Seattle. A specialist in Northwest Coast art, she has published many articles on argillite carving, and is author of *A Time of Gathering: Native Heritage in Washington State* (Seattle: Burke Museum and University of Washington Press, 1991). Her most recent book is *Northern Haida Master Carvers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery

Edited by **Lynda Jessup** with **Shannon Bagg**

In recognizing the established intellectual and institutional authority of Aboriginal artists, curators and academics working in cultural institutions and universities, this publication serves as an important primer on key questions that accompany the changing representational practices of the community cultural centre, the public art gallery and the anthropological museum.

In this anthology, Aboriginal and other contributors address current and provocative issues arising from Aboriginal historical and contemporary art, and their production, collection and exhibition.

This illustrated collection is based on workshops held at the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Vancouver Art Gallery in March 2000. It includes sixteen original papers and seven synthesizing "after-essays" that together reflect analytically and incisively on policies and practices in recent historical and contemporary curatorial projects.

Contributors

Shannon Bagg • Jean Blodgett • Wendy Brady • Delores Churchill • Skawennati Tricia Fragnito • Richard Fung • Aaron Glass • Lynn A. Hill • Richard William Hill • Tom Hill • Doreen Jensen and Rose Spahan • Lynda Jessup • Aldona Jonaitis • Christine Lalonde • Lee-Ann Martin • Moira T. McCaffrey • Gerald McMaster • Trudy Nicks • Ruth B. Phillips • Jolene Rickard • Clive Robertson • Jeff Thomas and Anna Hudson • Andrea Naomi Walsh • Robin K. Wright

Editors

Lynda Jessup teaches museum representation and the history of Canadian visual culture at Queen's University in Kingston. She is also editor of *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Shannon Bagg is a Ph.D. candidate in Art History at Queen's University. A specialist in contemporary Inuit art, she is author of *Making Art Work In Cape Dorset*, which accompanied an exhibition of the same name at the Carleton University Art Gallery in 1997. She has also worked as Curator of Inuit Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull.

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